

**10 TIPS FOR YOUR LIBRARY VISIT**

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2004, VOL. 22 / NO. 5

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# Ancestry



## **SNAPSHOTS THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES**

**Research in the  
Southwest**

**What's in the Future for  
Digitized Records?**

**Hidden Treasures at  
FamilySearch**

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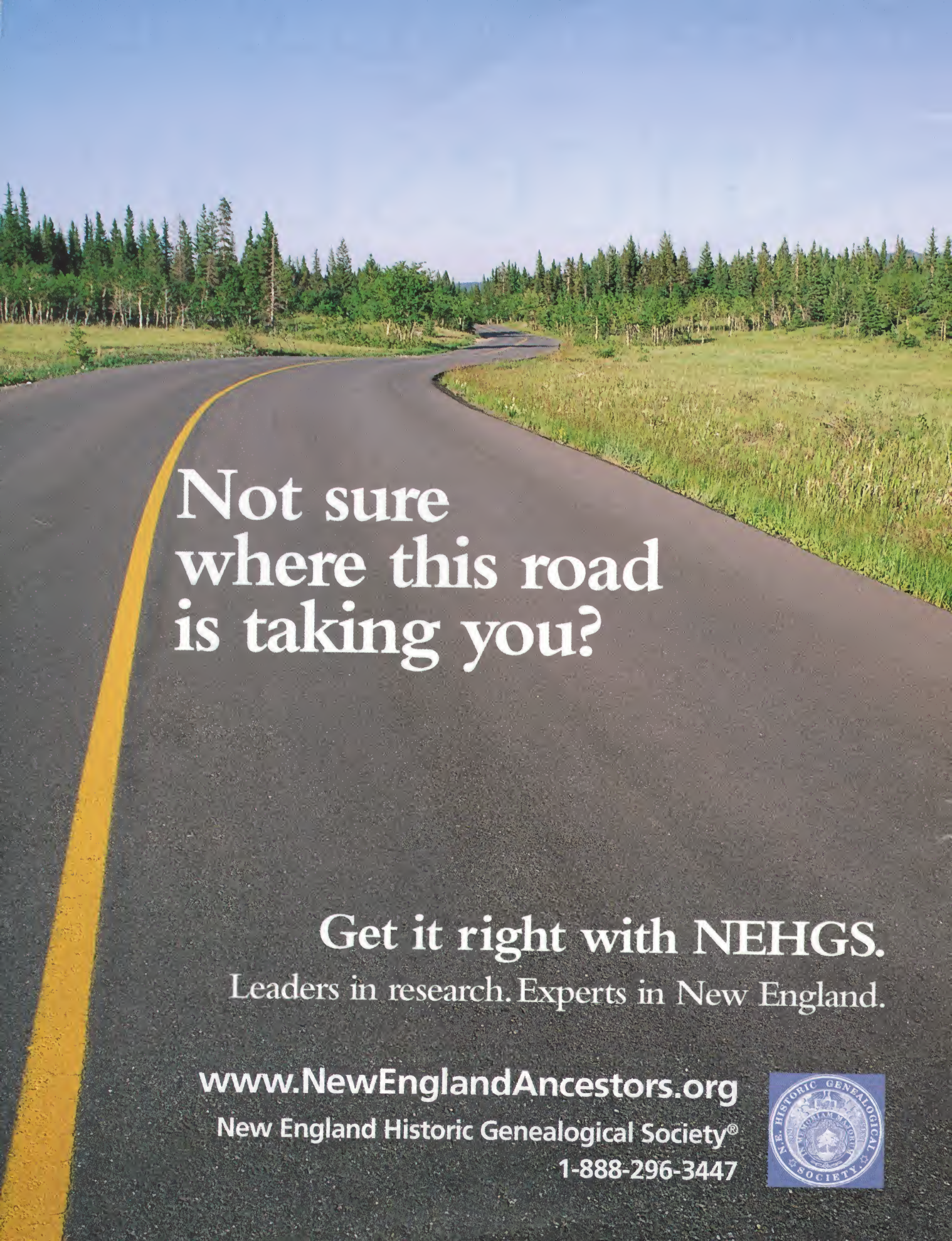
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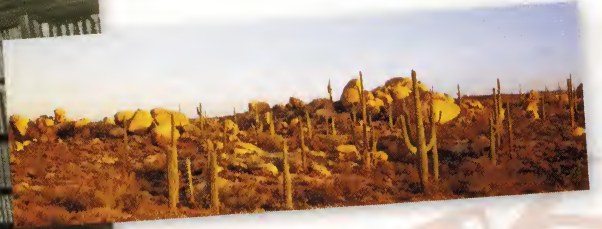
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# Ancestry

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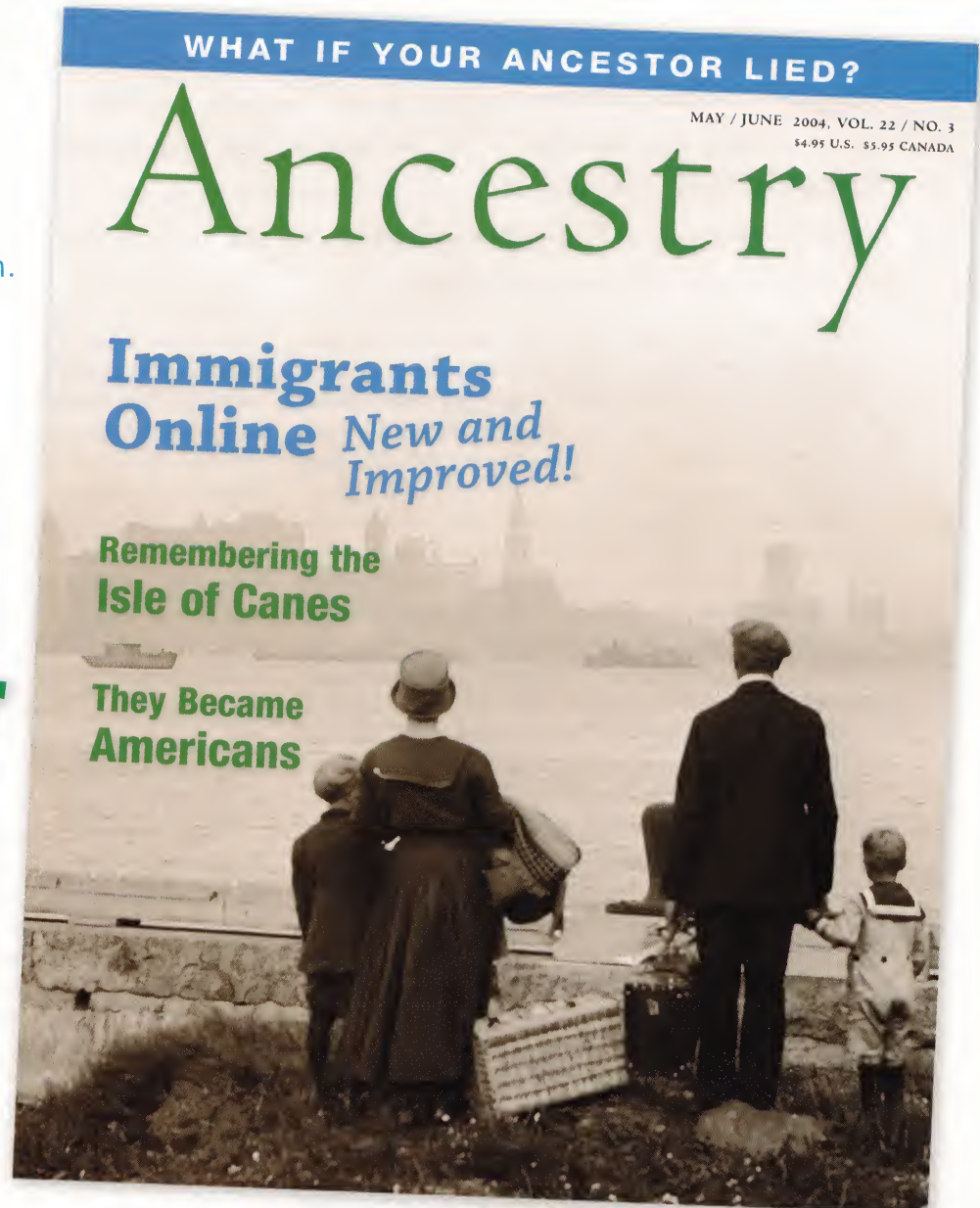
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The reunion was less than a week away. With photo contributions from many family members, and with the help of five grandchildren, nearly a thousand photographs had been scanned. It was overkill, but I didn't want to hurt feelings by leaving out someone's favorites.

Still, love the family or not, no one was going to sit through an epic that spanned five generations and lasted for hours! Panic set in as I realized that I had to select a precious few to fit into a good slideshow. But how?

The answer came as I left my daughter's house that day. Next to her front door is a framed quote: "One hundred years from now it will not matter what your bank account was, the sort of house you lived in or the clothes you wore, but the world will be a different place because you were important in the life of a child."

I can't find the origins of the quote, but the words gave me much needed inspiration. Hundreds of photos were cut from the production once I realized that most of the posed photos didn't say anything about the people in them. In one way or another, ancestors, parents, uncles and aunts, older siblings, cousins, and even older friends have influenced us and made differences in our lives. The story never changes. It's that way in every family. Only the photos that reflected that message were chosen for the slideshow.

The slideshow story opened on a sunny June afternoon a hundred years ago when a large group gathered to celebrate my mother's fifth birthday. Boys came to the party dressed in jackets and ties, little sailor suits, and buttoned boots. The sepia photos show girls wearing lace, ruffles, and big bows in their neatly curled or braided hair. My smiling great-grandmother posed for a backyard photo with a huge American flag hung on the fence behind her and a white cloth-covered table in front of her that was laden with flowers, cookies, what appears to be potato chips in a big glass bowl, and a birthday cake on a pedestal plate. A posed group shows my grandfather holding his baby son next to my grandmother, who has an arm around a young girl I believe is her niece. In the same photo, older cousins dote on younger ones nearby and my then five-year-old mother is the center of attention.

A hundred years later at our family reunion, even the youngest children watching the finished production enjoyed seeing pictures of the long-ago birthday celebra-

tion. And following the older photos of the family, they saw pictures of each other doing the same types of activities. It seemed to give them a sense of continuity.

The slideshow themes were varied. They showed decades of people playing in the park, playing chess and other table games, enjoying pets, reading and writing, vacationing on the beach, and standing by cars and houses. It was interesting for all of us to see family resemblances and to see people doing the same kinds of things we enjoy doing today.

Through the generations, birthdays have always provided the best photo ops. Dozens of celebrations captured on film reflect the changes and phases of life, especially in the way we dress. In contrast to the lovely clothes children wore to a party a hundred years ago, we have photos of the recent generation showing up in jeans, t-shirts, and baseball caps worn backward.

Even though this collection of photos is about my family, it is typical of most others. While the images clearly document the visible changes in style, more subtly, and more importantly, the photos show that some things never change. Mothers and fathers still clutch their children. Aunts, uncles, dear friends, and older siblings and cousins still hug and encourage the little ones. In every generation the old teach the young with the hope of making the world a better place. A hundred years later the circle of life continues. We all have the power to make the world a different place because we are "important in the life of a child." ♡



*Loretto A. Szucs*

Loretto (Lou) Dennis Szucs  
Executive Editor  
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## Naturalization Secrets

I would like to share my joy at finding a naturalization record that was far more informative than I would ever have believed, as suggested in the article by Loretto Dennis Szuces in the May/June 2004 issue of *Ancestry Magazine*, entitled "Early Naturalization Records." The date was as early as 1830!

When my great-great-grandfather made his application for naturalization in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, he was quoted as saying that he was born in the Cantonment of Waldfishback, Germany. He was forty-eight years of age, he owed allegiance to the King of Prussia, he landed in New York on 11 August 1826, he came to reside in Guilford township of Somerset County in March 1827, and Somerset County was the place of his intended settlement. His actual signature appears twice on the copy I have of that document. (That, naturally, makes it more valuable to me.)

The place of his birth has now been verified but no record exists as to when he and his family left Germany. I can find no record of a ship having landed in New York on the date he specified. I now wonder if he could have lied. Did he land somewhere other than New York? Are the records simply missing?

I hope that my good fortune will encourage others to keep digging. It took me forty years to find that missing piece from the jigsaw of my ancestry.

Verna Willson

## Thanks to Transcribers

After reading the letter from Eric Clasby ("From our Readers" July/August 2004), I wondered if the online source where he found his ancestors might have been the Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild (ISTG).

As an ISTG member and transcriber, I was intrigued enough by his letter that I searched the almost 6,000 passenger lists for the *Manchester* into New York City from England in June 1862, and found it in volume 3. Unfortunately, Mr. Clasby didn't include a family name in his letter nor did he submit any information to the ISTG about his family on the *Manchester*, so I'm not sure which passengers are his.

Transcribing can sometimes be surprisingly easy and other times extremely difficult—usually determined by the ink, handwriting, and condition of the original list; by the ability of the microfilmer; and perhaps by the legibility of a photocopy from the microfilm. The transcribers do their best, but deci-

phering those passengers' surnames is obviously problematic.

At minimum, the ISTG is more than willing to add a researcher's comment to the ship webpage to help other researchers. The ISTG can also add photographs of the immigrants, linked to the ship's list.

To *Ancestry* readers: If you discover an immigrant ancestor on the ISTG website, please add to the information on his or her ship's list by contacting either the transcriber or the ISTG.

Carolyn "Cari" McQuaid Thomas

## Family Tree Blanket

I enjoyed your article on crafty family trees in the July/August 2004 issue of *Ancestry*. My mom turned eighty this past June and we decided to make her a family tree blanket. We used velux blanket material with the names embroidered on it; the pictures were scanned, transferred to the material, and sewn on the blanket above their names. We used several businesses in the area to get it all finished, one to embroider, one to do the picture transfers, and one to sew them on the blanket. We did the scanning of the pictures. My mom got a lot of fun presents, but this one took the prize!

Judy Sheldon

Greenbush, Michigan

## Readers' Voices: What types of records would you like to see online?

### Mid-decade Censuses

I would like to see mid-decade censuses for New York City namely 1895, 1905, 1915, 1925 and New Jersey's City of Hoboken mid-decade censuses of 1905, 1915, and 1925. It would be very helpful probably not only for me but for many others as well.

George W. Martin

### African American Records

I would like to see more records related to finding ancestors that may

have been slaves or free Blacks and other Black genealogy supports as it seems so difficult to access information from other states without going there. Also, World War II draft records (when they become available) would be nice, as would census mortality reports beyond 1880.

anon.

### Scottish Census

I wish that I could have access to the Scottish Census. I have someone

in Scotland who has been doing my research for me, at a cost. It would be so much more satisfying to be able to do my own.

Linda Bleschke

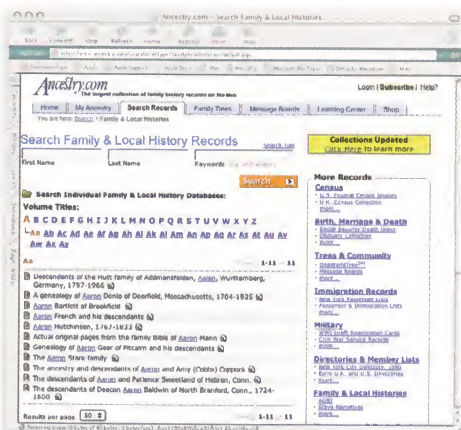
### Readers' Voices Question

**How do you use MyFamily.com in your family history research?**

Please e-mail your response to Readers' Voices at [<editoram@ancestry.com>](mailto:editoram@ancestry.com).



# What's New at MyFamily.com, Inc.



## Family and Local Histories Collection

Ancestry.com recently released the Family and Local Histories Collection. The collection includes 20,000 searchable books and more than 75 million names. This is the largest online collection of its kind, and Ancestry.com will add to the collection weekly to ensure that it remains the best online resource for family and local histories. The Family and Local Histories collection on Genealogy.com represents a portion of the Ancestry.com Family and Local Histories Collection.

While compiled family histories are only secondary sources, they can provide valuable clues to help break through brick walls and further your research. Local histories, in addition to providing clues, also add depth and interest to your family history. This new subscription is the best place online to look for previously published research on your ancestors. Locating these types of materials in the past may have required costly and extensive research and travel to libraries and archives across

the country and around the world, but Ancestry.com brings them as close as your home computer.

## New Search Method on Ancestry.com

Ancestry.com recently unveiled a new "best matches" relevance-ranked search method to add to its traditional "exact matches" search. The new ranked search helps you find your ancestors quickly and easily because it brings up the best possible matches first in your list of search results. In addition, the new search method gives you the option of performing event-based searches, meaning that you can specify a date and place of birth and/or a date and place of death in your search criteria. And, to make it even easier for you to decide where to look first, the search results page reveals more information about your matches right away. You can now see the most relevant matches from all Ancestry.com databases on the initial search results page, complete with basic information about birth, marriage, and death events.

To access the relevance-ranked search, login to Ancestry.com and click on Search Records. On the Search screen, you will have a choice between the traditional search method, Exact Matches Only, and the new method, Best Matches (Ranked). Click Best Matches (Ranked), enter all of the information you have for your ancestor, and click Search.

See page 30 for more information.

## Census Update

### 1850 Census Every-Name Index.

Ancestry.com has completed its new every-name index to the 1850 U.S. Federal Census. Each entry is linked to the corresponding image, and the exclusive every-name index represents a vast improvement over previous indexes. This index includes the names of every member of the household, rather than just the head of household. It also allows users to specify an age and birthplace, creating a much more powerful search tool. This index replaces the AIS index that has been on the Ancestry.com website.

**1910 New Head-of-Household Index.** Ancestry.com is currently developing a new head-of-household index for the 1910 census. Although it is not yet linked to the images on the site, the linking is slated to begin within the next few months. This is the first index for 1910 that has been available on the Ancestry.com website.



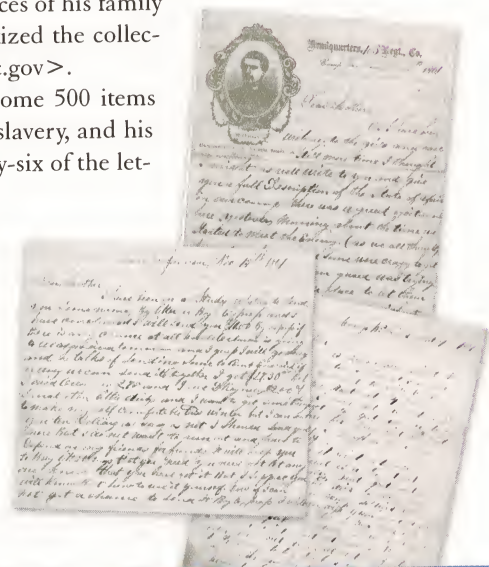


## A Civil War Soldier's Memorabilia Online

Captain Tilton C. Reynolds served as a Union soldier in the Civil War. More than 200 years later, letters, photographs, diaries, and other papers are left behind to tell us about his experiences and the experiences of his family members. The Library of Congress has digitized the collection and posted it on its website at [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov).

The Tilton C. Reynolds papers contain some 500 items that describe Tilton's daily life, his views on slavery, and his feelings about seeing President Lincoln. Forty-six of the letters are transcribed for greater accessibility.

The collection, "A Civil War Soldier in the Wild Cat Regiment," features two additional sections: "Timeline: History of the 105th Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861-1865" and a Reynolds family section. To view the Tilton C. Reynolds collection online, go to <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/tcrhtml/>.



## Mount Vernon in Miniature Tours the Country

A miniature version of George Washington's historic Mount Vernon home is currently on display in the Hoover Presidential Library of West Branch, Iowa.

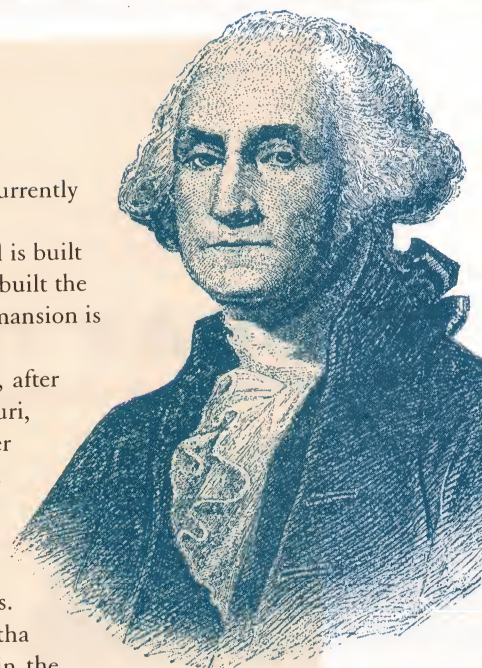
Measuring ten feet long, over eight feet high, and about six feet wide, the model is built to a scale of one inch to one foot. A group of miniaturists from Washington State built the mini-mansion over the course of five years. Remarkably, nearly every detail of the mansion is in working order—including doorknobs, windows, and fireplaces.

Mount Vernon in Miniature will be on display in Iowa until 31 October 2004, after which it will be displayed at the Toy and Miniature Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, from 12 November 2004 to 27 March 2005. From 8 April 2005 until 11 September 2005, it will be displayed in the Clinton Library in Little Rock, Arkansas, and from about September 2005 to April 2006 it will be displayed in the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Once the new Mount Vernon Orientation Center opens in 2006 or 2007, the miniature mansion will stay permanently at Mount Vernon, Virginia.

Mount Vernon was the home of America's first president for over forty years. George Washington called his home a "well-resorted tavern" because he and Martha

hosted nearly seven hundred guests there in the year 1798 alone. George Washington taught himself architecture, and he took pride in remodeling and decorating his home.

After Washington's death, his family lived at Mount Vernon for nearly fifty years, and in 1858 the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association purchased the entire estate. Since that time, the nonprofit organization has handled the property's restoration, maintenance, and operation.





# AMERICA'S ANCESTRY According to the 2000 Census

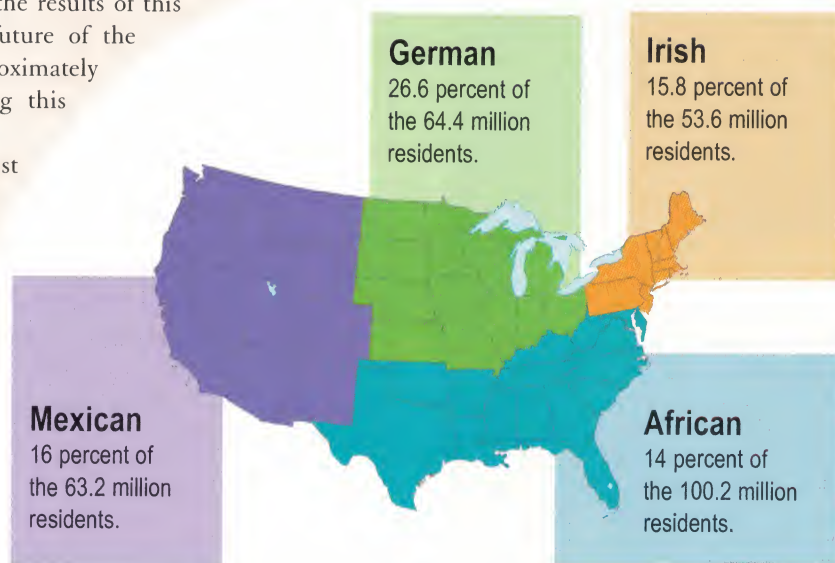
During the enumeration of the 2000 U.S. Federal Census, one in six households received a longer form than the rest of the country's residents. This form included an important question for future family historians: "What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?"

Ancestry is a difficult term to define, but U.S. Census Bureau officials have done their best to analyze the results of this question and its implications for the future of the United States. Respondents reported approximately five hundred different ancestries during this census.

According to the results, the largest ancestral group in the United States is German—15 percent of respondents listed German as part of their ancestry. The second-largest group was Irish, with 10.8 percent; third was African American, with 8.8 percent; fourth was English, with 8.7 percent; and fifth was American, with 7.2 percent.

Over the past ten years, German, Irish, and English numbers have decreased significantly. African American, Hispanic, and Asian numbers have increased over this same period of time.

For more information about the 2000 U.S. Federal Census, go to [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).



## Largest Ancestral Groups for Each Region of the United States

Irish ancestry dominated the Northeast, with 15.8 percent of the area's 53.6 million residents. German ancestry was the largest group in the Midwest—in fact, German was the largest ancestral group in every state in this region. It made up 26.6 percent of the 64.4 million people's ancestries. The 100.2 million people who live in the South are 14 percent African. Mexican ancestry took the highest percentage of the West, with 16 percent of the area's 63.2 million residents.

## TODAY IN HISTORY

Use these famous moments in history to enhance your family history timelines.

### 3 SEPTEMBER 1875

Ferdinand Porsche, the German automotive engineer, was born. He designed the Volkswagen and the Porsche. Professor Porsche received little formal education, but his mechanical skills enabled him to find success in the automotive industry. He received an honorary doctorate from Vienna Technical University.

### 11 SEPTEMBER 1850

Jenny Lind, also known as "the Swedish Nightingale," gave her first concert in the United States, at Castle Garden in New York City. Her international opera debut took place in Berlin in 1844. Lind's natural style and beautiful soprano voice brought adoration from people across the world. She was known not only for her exquisite voice but also for her generous contributions to charity.

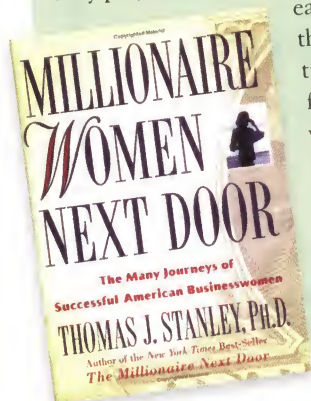


## Millionaire Traits May Run in the Family

We've all heard that genetics can predispose us to certain medical conditions, but can it also affect our likelihood of becoming wealthy? In his new book, *Millionaire Women Next Door*, Dr. Thomas J. Stanley reveals interesting information about the ancestry of millionaire women.

According to his survey, people with Scottish ancestry are more likely to be millionaires than any other ethnic group. Though they make up only 1.7 percent of American households, they make up a full 8.5 percent of the millionaires Stanley surveyed. Those with French, Russian, Dutch, and English ancestry ranked second, third, fourth, and fifth, respectively.

Stanley also points out that a woman's ancestry may play a part in how generous she is with her hard-earned money. He compared the donation habits of twenty-six ancestral groups and found that African-American women were the most generous in giving to charities. While the average female business owner donates less than 7 percent of her income, African-American women donate about 10 percent.



## GRANDMA'S Elusive COBBLER RECIPE

If one of your ancestors was a culinary artist, but those favorite recipes have disappeared from family tradition, there is a new place you can go to find missing recipes.

Seventeenth Century English Recipes at [www.godecookery.com/engrec.html](http://www.godecookery.com/engrec.html) provides popular English recipes from the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. A few examples include "an exceeding good way to stew chickens," "sausages to boyl," and "cowslip-tart."

Another website, "Feeding America: The Historic American Cookbook Project," at <http://digital.lib.msu.edu/cookbooks/> was created by the Michigan State University Library and Museum. It references many of America's well-loved nineteenth- and twentieth-century cookbooks. The historic cookbooks are searchable by subject, keyword, title, and author, and each page has been digitized and posted online. You can learn how to whip cream by hand in Marion Harland's *Breakfast, Lunch, and Tea*, or you can find the recipe for Trout a la Joan of Arc, in Charles Ranhofer's *The Epicurean*.

Even if you can't find that rare recipe your great-grandmother was known for, these websites are sure to help you get a feel for the types of food your ancestors would have eaten. And if you're lucky, you just might chance upon a recipe very similar to your great-grandmother's.



## HISTORY TODAY IN HISTORY

### 15 SEPTEMBER 1935

The Nuremberg Laws, which took away German Jews' citizenship and prohibit marriage between non-Jews and Jews, were passed. Numerous other injustices continued to plague Jews as a result of these laws—Jews were unable to buy food and even medicine.

### 22 SEPTEMBER 1762

Catherine the Great became the Empress of Russia, having just deposed her husband, Peter III. Peter had been ruler of Russia for just one year. Catherine's coronation took place in Moscow, at the Cathedral of the Assumption in the Kremlin. Her reign was highly successful. Among other achievements, Catherine helped bring Russia closer to Western culture, thus making St. Petersburg a central figure in European culture. When Catherine the Great died in 1796, she had lived longer than any of the other Romanov monarchs.

### 25 SEPTEMBER 1981

Sandra Day O'Connor took the oath of office to become the Supreme Court's 102nd justice. Nominated by President Ronald Reagan, she was the first female Supreme Court justice. O'Connor graduated magna cum laude from Stanford University in 1950, and earned her law degree in 1952, the same year she married John Day O'Connor.





"Have you given thought to the veritable *brick wall* you may be creating for future genealogists?"

## TODAY IN HISTORY

### 9 OCTOBER 1936

Transmission of electricity from Hoover Dam to Los Angeles, California, began. The dam, named for President Herbert Hoover, was the tallest dam in the world when it was completed in 1935. Electricity was only a side benefit for this dam—its primary purpose was to distribute water to the arid American West.

### 23 OCTOBER 1940

Soccer legend Pelé was born Edson Arantes Do Nascimento. He holds the all-time world record of 1,281 goals in 1,363 matches, and he has scored more goals than any other Brazilian. In 1999, the National Olympics Committees voted Pelé the No. 1 Athlete of the Century—even though Pelé has never competed in the Olympics. More recently, Pelé carried the Olympic torch in preparation for the Athens 2004 Olympics.

### 25 OCTOBER 1923

Senator Thomas J. Walsh shares the information he found during an eighteen-month investigation of Secretary of the Interior Albert F. Fall. Fall had allowed two friends to lease part of the oil reserves in California and Wyoming, and as a consequence he was forced to pay a \$100,000 fine and serve one year in prison. He was the first United States cabinet member to serve prison time.



# Africana Heritage Project

A volunteer-driven project by the University of South Florida aims to make African-American genealogical and cultural information available for free online. Those who currently research African-American genealogy will also be interested in the site's listing of helpful online archives such as <[www.linkpendium.com](http://www.linkpendium.com)>, <[www.afrigenas.com](http://www.afrigenas.com)>, and Government Land Office Records at <[www.glorerecords.blm.gov](http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov)>.

Other areas of interest on the website include an article on tracing slaves in the 1860 census, pages on which to submit records or family stories, Christine's Q&A section, and Eleanor's favorite links. Of particular interest to educators is the "By Teachers for Teachers" page, which offers lesson plans and articles about exceptional teachers, and the "Teacher's Idea Bank," which lists links to other lesson plans about African Studies, slavery, and African American culture. You can find the Africana Heritage Project online at <[www.africanaheritage.com](http://www.africanaheritage.com)>.



## Photo Corner

This ca. 1896 photo shows a group of friends on a picnic outside The Dalles, Oregon. The woman standing in the white dress is my grandmother Rebecca Chamberlain. She married George Hilderbrand (who won her in a poker game) and became the mother of seven children. The family farmed wheat outside Wasco, Oregon.

—submitted by Sharon Lynt



These two photos are of my great-grandfather, Thomas C. Jennings. The first is a 1908 photo of him (shown in front in suspenders) as a section foreman for the Southern Railroad. The second was taken in 1940 in what is believed to be Felts Station, Tennessee. The section gang was repairing track. My great-grandfather worked for the railroad all his life. He began his career with M&O Railroad in 1905, and retired from Illinois Central Railroad in 1946.

—submitted by Sandi Russell



Would you like to see a favorite photo of your ancestors in *Ancestry Magazine*? Now you can submit your photos to Photo Corner. Submissions should include your name, contact information, date of photo, who is pictured, and a short description. Please do not submit a photo of living persons without their written consent. Mail a quality duplicate (no photocopies or originals) to *Ancestry Magazine* 360 West 4800 North, Provo, UT 84604, or e-mail a 300 DPI TIFF scan to <[editoram@ancestry.com](mailto:editoram@ancestry.com)>. Submissions become the property of *Ancestry Magazine*. You will be contacted if your photo is chosen.



## The Ellis Island Collection: Artifacts from the Immigrant Experience

by Brad R. Tuttle. Chronicle Books, 2004. 48 pages, with 23 sample artifacts. \$24.95. For more information or to order, go to <[www.chroniclebooks.com](http://www.chroniclebooks.com)>.

From 1892 to 1924, millions of people from throughout the world passed through Ellis Island in hopes of entering America, a complicated process that generated numerous documents, many that have been duplicated for this unique collection. To create this "museum in a box," twenty-three artifacts from the "Island of Hope, Island of Tears" have been meticulously duplicated, recreating the immigration process for several immigrants, including Irish Catholics, Germans, Russian Jews, Hungarians, and Italians.

Brad Tuttle's informative booklet discusses the types of documents represented and their significance. Artifacts include a copy of a steamship poster displayed in Naples in 1906, steamship postcards, steamship company inspection card, steamship ticket, and ship manifest. You'll also find the required documentation for immigrations: birth certificate, passport, Declarations of Aliens About to Depart for the United States, Declaration of Intention, literacy test, and Certificate of Citizenship. Additional items of interest include five photographic portraits, a bill of fare (showing a menu from Ellis Island), a receipt from the American Consular Service, a letter from an Irish immigrant, a telegram, and simulated money.

This collection will undoubtedly be valued by teachers, family historians, and anyone whose immigrant ancestors came through Ellis Island.

## Scrapbooking Your Vacations: 200 Page Designs

by Susan Ure. Sterling Publishing Co., 2004. 128 pages. Hardcover. \$24.95. For more information or to order, go to <[www.sterpub.com](http://www.sterpub.com)>.

Even experienced scrapbookers will benefit from the fresh ideas in this colorful book of more than 200 page plans, which offer designs inspired by various vacation locales around the world. Vivid examples of page designs showcase vacation spots in Europe, Africa, Asia, the South Pacific, and North America with colorful photos set in vibrantly original page designs. Designs make use of all manner of textures, papers, and other materials to help recreate both the exotic and the native aspects of other countries and of our own.

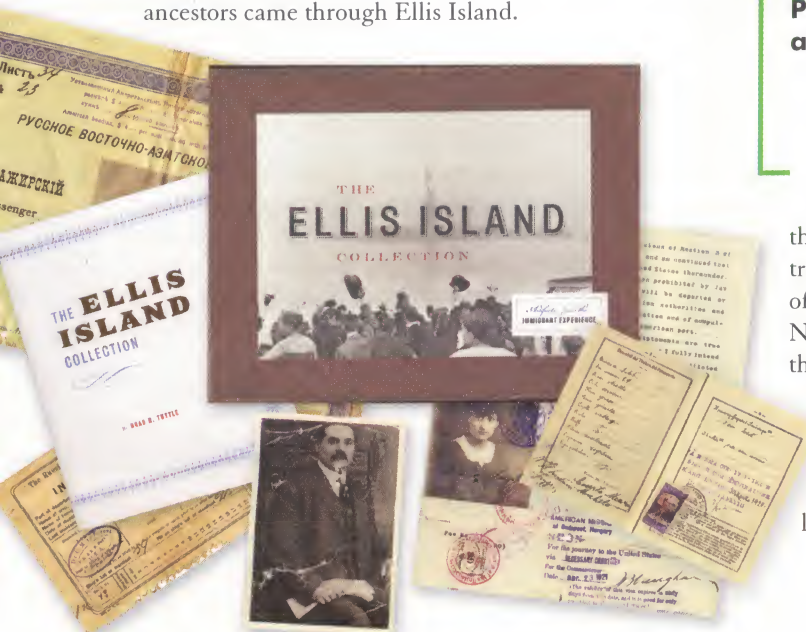
For each sample scrapbook page, the author lists the materials used to create the original page, such as pressed flowers, small twigs, rice and bamboo paper, ribbons, and stickers. Keepsakes are displayed securely in a small florist's, or semi-transparent, envelope. The author's hints and suggestions will keep souvenirs organized, and the helpful tips can be applied to other scrapbook projects and creative endeavors. Suggestions include using a matte smaller than the picture itself to create an image-within-an-image or using crisscrossed ribbon for a "bulletin board" look. The unusual and striking designs are bound to create pages that are as memorable and interesting as the vacation itself.

## Plantagenet Ancestry: A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families

by Douglas Richardson. Genealogical Publishing Company. 945 pages. Hardcover. \$85. To order, go to <[www.royalancestry.net](http://www.royalancestry.net)>.

This volume is the first in a series on the ancestry of the American colonial immigrants having English ancestry, noble, or royal ancestry. Here are documented lines of descent for approximately 190 seventeenth-century North American colonists from the Plantagenet dynasty that ruled England from 1154 to 1485, beginning with Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou.

Customary information such as dates of birth, death, and marriage, major landholdings, titles, and offices are included when known. Many individuals were leading participants in the complex political and military





activities of the times (namely the War of the Roses), and participation is often included. The lives of the higher ranking individuals reveal a large number of deaths in battle or by execution (with and without trial).

Primary sources are used, both in original form and published abstracts, as well as secondary sources. Footnotes are given throughout the text that list the names of which American colonial immigrants descend from which families, and which immigrants are closely related to one another. Illegitimate children are included, where known.

The book has been compiled as a reference for those wanting more information on their remote ancestry, and on events and individuals in the colonial and medieval time periods. It can also help provide a better understanding of English history in terms of family dynamics.

**Map Guide to German Parish Registers, Vol. 1 Grandduchy of Hessen and Vol. 3 Grandduchies of Mecklenburg-Schwerin & Mecklenburg-Strelitz**

by Kevan M. Hansen, *Heritage Creations*, 2004. Vol. 1, 199 pages; Vol. 3, 300 pages. Softbound. \$34.95 per volume. To order, go to <[www.heritagecreations.com](http://www.heritagecreations.com)>.

In the past, genealogists searching for parish records in Germany have had to trace the jurisdictions by using old gazetteers—often written in gothic German—to find towns and villages, and their respective parishes. Now locating a parish for Catholic or Lutheran jurisdictions is as simple as locating the name of the parish on a map and finding the specific town, parish, or adjoining parishes.

Each volume of the *Map Guide* is a master index to the parishes themselves, a listing of towns in that district, and the Family History Library microfilm numbers. By entering this number in the Microfilm Number Search in the Family History Library Catalog at <[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)>, you can obtain a printout of all films for a given parish and years included on each one. Resources such as archives and repositories are also given.

By working with digitized underlying maps of Germany, the old boundaries were drawn to encompass

those towns included in each individual parish. This provides a view of how the various parishes fit together, and it defines the boundaries of each district, adjoining towns, and surrounding parishes. Population centers in each church parish can now be located as well as the location of minority religions.

**County Longford Residents Prior to the Famine: A Transcription and Complete Index of the Tithe Applotment Books of County Longford, Ireland (1823-1835)**

by Guy A. Rymza, *Dome Shadow Press*, 2004. 439 pages. Hardcover. \$49.95 plus s/h. Order at <[www.domeshadowpress.com](http://www.domeshadowpress.com)>.

Author Guy A. Rymza has begun to fill the void in nineteenth-century Irish census returns by making the information found in a taxation record of landowners easily accessible for the first time.

He begins with a brief but thorough introduction to the Tithe Applotment Books and an explanation of his presentation method. A full-name index of over 12,600 male and female tithe payers is followed by the complete recapitulation of records, arranged alphabetically by over 930 townland divisions. This recap serves as an index of the twenty-seven civil parish maps of townlands, which are accompanied by three maps of Longford's major land divisions. A handy table will allow you to easily locate Longford's microfilmed Tithe Book record images for further research.

For more family history books and products, visit <<http://shops.ancestry.com>>.







**W**hen an online photographic magazine asked its subscribers to relate their early experiences with photography, one woman remembered lying on the sidewalk and taking a picture of a snow-covered rose in May. Anthony Dean remembered how his father always gave him the camera whenever there was a special occasion. His father would say, "Go take pictures of everyone and be sneaky about it."



# SNAPSHOTS

## FROM CHILDHOOD

by Maureen A. Taylor







Photography provides children with an outlet for creativity. As one thirteen-year-old explained, "If you are not good at drawing you can still express yourself through pictures." Eleven-year-old Greg likes "being able to freeze time," and fifteen-year-old Karina likes that she can "capture an important moment in your life and remember it and the people there forever." Perhaps fourteen-year-old David says it best: "You look back on [photographs] and go, 'Wow, that was great.'"

Children and photography are a natural combination. Taking pictures enriches children's lives by empowering them through self-expression, at the same time enriching your family photograph albums and histories. Photography helps children develop a heightened sense of the world around them and the resulting photos will surprise and delight you with an open window into the perceptions and feelings of these budding photographers.

Historically, children were involved in photography in much the same way they are today—as subjects and as photographers. Children not only sat for family and school portraits, they participated in the history of photography with handmade cameras and took pictures with manufactured models marketed to them.

### A BROWNIE FOR A DOLLAR

Generations of kids have documented their lives by taking pictures of pets, loved ones, and friends for as far back as the first amateur cameras of the 1880s. In the first half-century of the development of photography, heavy cameras, dangerous chemicals, and complicated instructions kept children in front of the camera rather than behind the viewfinder. But the appeal of photography was too great, and kids were destined to become some of its biggest advocates.

Inventive children began to experiment with the new medium, making pinhole cameras (a simple box device with a hole and light-sensitive paper) and trying out contact printing (sun pictures). Children's magazines and publications like the *Handy Book for Boys* offered instructions on building handmade cameras.

When George Eastman introduced the first Kodak camera in 1888, kids were given the practical opportunity they needed. The slogan "You Press the Button, We Do the Rest!" said it all. Picture-taking was now a simple click of the shutter. When they were first introduced, these cameras came loaded with film that could be reloaded only when the cameras were sent back to the factory for processing and film development. Nevertheless, these early Kodak cameras were a huge success.

In 1900, the introduction of the Kodak Brownie, which remained in production for eighty years, further inspired generations of children to follow their dreams of photography—taking candid photographs of their everyday lives. A revolution had begun.

The Brownie was a mass-market marvel and almost a quarter million of them sold in the first year. Kodak reached out to the untapped youth market in the United States and elsewhere, advertising a camera that "any school age boy and girl could easily operate." It was especially suitable for children because of its simplicity, size, and price. It sold for a dollar, well within the means of any frugal child. The camera had a six-exposure film cartridge that could be loaded in daylight. Other snapshot cameras were available, but the Brownie's price tag made it an instant success.



With the Brownie, children found a new creative outlet. They selected their subjects and props, and arranged their own photographic albums. Youngsters enthusiastically took the opportunity to photograph their world.

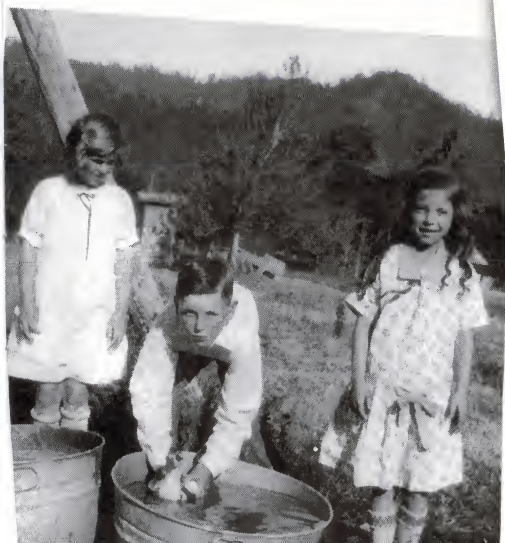
Twelve-year-old Ansel Adams was given a Brownie by his parents as a birthday present; the camera was used to take his first pictures of Half Dome in Yosemite. Kodak representatives taught the children of Tsar Nicholas II of

**THE INTRODUCTION  
OF THE KODAK BROWNIE  
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Russia how to use the camera. Seventeen-year-old Bernice Palmer, a passenger on the *Carpathia*, captured the sinking of the *Titanic* with her Brownie. And child actors like Jane Withers, who starred in films in the 1930s and 40s, took their Brownies to the set to candidly photograph their famous co-stars.

Children in other countries were also taking pictures. In France, seven-year-old Jacques-Henri Lartique received a Gaumont camera in 1902 from his father. Later, Jacques wrote in his diary that "photography is something you learn to love very quickly." His childhood photographs were exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City when he was seventy years old.

Early in the 1900s, educators grasped the importance of photography and began to use it in their classrooms. The September 1916 issue of *School Arts Magazine* featured an account of a photography project by eighth-grade students for a commencement-day presentation. The project, "Harmonies and Discords in Provo," involved students from art and English classes who critically examined their neighborhood in a pictorial study. The usual graduation-day ceremony became a public meeting attended by local officials who gazed upon the photographic evidence of billboards and graffiti that marred the landscape of the community. Attendees listened to a student presentation on ways to improve conditions in the area. The success of the project led to the formation of the Kodak Club for pupils in grades 4–8, which was advised by teachers and professional photographers in the area.







Today, kids begin taking pictures at a young age—often with a digital camera. Digital photography is attractive to children because of its direct connection to computer technology, at which so many of them are naturally adept. Working with digital images, children have the capability to easily share and manipulate their creations.

Few classrooms are without a camera or two for documenting daily activities, science projects, and special trips. Most schools now incorporate pictures taken by students into their weekly newsletters.

In England, a cooperative venture led by the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, the University of Birmingham, and Kodak is exploring the pictures children take and how they use cameras. The “Children as Photographers” website at <[www.cap.ac.uk/cap.asp](http://www.cap.ac.uk/cap.asp)> features photographs taken by 180 children from five European countries. It shows the students’ comments about their photographs, and provides links for teachers. Visitors can search the selections by children’s age, country, subject matter, or gender. The website is a fascinating study of how children view their world.

### TREASURES IN SNAPSHOTS

Illustrated genealogies often contain images of adults, but how many represent ancestral childhoods? If you look

closely, you may find pictures taken by children in your collection that will enliven your family history. The challenge is to find these treasures among your own photographic collections, or among the collections of your relatives. You’ll find that formal portraits taken by professional photographers visually illustrate genealogical detail, but images taken by children capture the energy, excitement, spontaneity, and innocence of childhood.

**IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY,  
YOU MAY FIND PICTURES  
TAKEN BY CHILDREN  
IN YOUR COLLECTION  
THAT WILL ENLIVEN YOUR  
FAMILY HISTORY.**

Whether they snapped pictures playing with friends or took pictures for a class assignment, you’ll want to locate their efforts. These pictures are all part of your family history and will enrich it visually. Not every picture taken by



a child will be in focus, but they will allow you to view family history through a child's eyes.

Start by taking out your family photograph collection and re-examining each image for signs that they may have been taken by a child. Photographs taken by children have subtle differences such as camera angle (due to height), choice of subject, and photographic ability. Children (like adults) photograph the things in their lives that are important to them, such as other children in the neighborhood, their toys and belongings, their parents, and their pets.

You'll also want to search the photographic collections of relatives and ask for their assistance in identifying your photos, when needed. When visiting relatives, bring copies of your family photos with you rather than originals to prevent loss or damage. Copies are easy to make by visiting a photo kiosk available in photo stores across the country. Leave the duplicates with your relatives to thank them for their time. Who knows? They might contact you later with some additional details they recalled when gazing at the picture a second time.

Ask older relatives to tell you about their first cameras. They'll probably relate the story of the Brownie they received as a gift for a birthday or holiday. Then ask about the whereabouts of the photos they took as children. Your relatives might surprise you by pulling out a black paper album full of snapshots. If you can find these photos, you'll be well on your way to unravelling whole new chapters of your family's past—simply by using their photographs to jog memories of childhood events and people.

Turn this picture-hunting occasion into a family history opportunity by recording your elderly relatives' reminiscences of their childhoods. Use oral history interviewing techniques to uncover the stories behind as many childhood pictures as possible.

As you would with any oral history interview, prepare by bringing recording equipment, such as a tape recorder or a video camera so that you'll have a record of everything the interviewee says. If the photographs are owned by the relative you're interviewing, you may even want to bring a digital or traditional film camera with a close-up lens so that you can make copies of the pictures to include in your family history and to consult later when you replay your recording.

As your relatives view their pictures, seek out answers to questions, such as:

*Who is depicted in the image?* You are looking for as much information as possible on each person depicted—names and nicknames as well as dates. This data will help with later research but will also give you context for many of the other photos you view. You will undoubtedly see many of the same individuals throughout the photo collection.

*What do you know about this person/place/thing?* Try to learn more about the individuals

## BOOKS FOR YOUR REFERENCE LIBRARY

Learn more about ancestral childhoods through portraits with *America's Children: Picturing Childhood from Early America to the Present* by Kathleen Thompson and Hilary MacAustin (W. W. Norton, 2003).

The authors explore the history of childhood through images and text. Robert Coles presents another historical overview in *When They Were Young: A Photographic Retrospective of Childhood from the Library of Congress* (Kales Press, 2002).





in the photographs. If you're looking at a picture of a neighborhood, ask questions relevant to the image such as where it was taken. Images of playthings will generate different inquiries revolving around the importance of that object in their childhood.

*Where did they live?* This may seem like an obvious question, but it can encourage relatives to give details such as how the family shown in the photo once lived next door but then moved across country searching for work during the Depression years. You'll end up with the full story of those people instead of a single statement.

*How are they related to you?* You'll want to know how the individuals in the photographs are related to the person you're interviewing or if they were just family friends. Regardless of who the individuals are, each story will add more context and breadth to the possibly sketchy details you have of your ancestors' childhoods.

*When and where was this picture taken?* Few people can remember the exact year of a picture, but the image will likely trigger a memory of an event that happened before or after the photograph was taken. You'll be surprised by the recollections sparked by a single picture. A relative could volunteer that he or she remembers taking a particular image when the family was on vacation, at a wedding, or just walking around the neighborhood. You may also hear details of the wedding or learn that the family always stopped off for ice cream during Sunday afternoon walks. In any case, one memory will lead to another and that information will provide the details you are seeking—and perhaps yield clues to a formidable brick wall in your family history.

## HEAD BRACES FOR SQUIRMY CHILDREN

During the early years of photography, taking a picture of a squirmy child was not easy, and with slow shutter speeds the result was often a blurry image.

Photographers often advertised their expertise at photographing children. Special devices such as head and waist braces kept children in their seat for the required amount of time, but many photographers also employed props such as toys to distract their young customers. Studios attracted business with ads that included "customer satisfaction guaranteed."

Studios also published guides on how to take a good portrait. Among the parental instructions suggested by Coleman & Remington of Providence, Rhode Island, were to "avoid giving or mentioning sweets" to their children as well as to refrain from playing or fussing with their kids in the studio. Parental involvement was discouraged with the advice that "a child will sit best if left entirely to the (camera) operator."

While your relatives are talking about the snapshots from their childhoods, ask them about the professional childhood portraits in the family albums as well. Their recollections of those moments will undoubtedly add to your collection of family history stories. For instance, one woman





brought a group photograph with her when she visited her great-aunt just in case the woman could tell her who was in the picture. Imagine her surprise when the aunt remarked that she knew everyone in the image because they were her family! The aunt not only identified each of her siblings,

**RECOLLECTIONS OF  
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STORIES.**

but she recounted the whole story behind the picture as well. Her father had insisted that all the children dress up for a trip into the city for a family photograph. The aunt remembered that she was so excited about the photographer's studio that she couldn't sit still or look directly at

the camera, which resulted in a less than ideal pose. In the portrait, she is looking up rather than forward.

Don't overlook your own childhood contributions. If you have photographs you took as a child stored away, pull them out and study them. Write down your memories of the events and individuals represented and label the images with names and dates. Record your own childhood memories by asking yourself the same questions you used with relatives.

Encourage your children and grandchildren to become involved in photographing their family history. Photography is a fun and easy hobby that few people will hesitate to get involved in. And the past hundred years have proved that children and cameras are a natural match. Cameras introduce kids to the concept of the world around them, provide them with a chance to explore their lives, and allow them to document everyday family activities. They are a great introduction to the history of their family. ♡

*Maureen A. Taylor writes "Saving Family Treasures," a monthly column that appears in the Ancestry Daily News, and is the author of Scrapbooking Your Family History (Betterway 2003) and Preserving Family Photographs (Betterway 2002).*











# 10 tips to becoming an effective library patron

*By George G. Morgan*

**Y**esteryear's stereotype of the little gray-haired librarian, with her hair in a bun and her eye-glasses perched on the tip of her nose, pacing the library shushing people, no longer exists. The modern librarian is an information broker whose job is to provide us with a wealth of different resources.

In the genealogical research arena, the information and materials we request are often unique from those in other areas of the library. And the questions we ask librarians can often be challenging. But before you run to the librarian for help, consider the following research strategies to becoming an effective library patron.



# 1 Come Prepared

Advance preparation is essential to having research success at any library or archive. It seldom pays to just show up at the library with no idea of who or what you want to research.

You'll want to review everything you've compiled about the specific ancestor(s) you plan to research before you leave home. Study the documents. Place everything you know about an individual in chronological order. This allows you to reconstruct the collection of facts about the person's life so you have a good sense of time, place, events, and historical context. You may also want to make copies of specific documents so you have them for reference when you visit the library or archive. (Don't take originals.) Or you may choose to print a chart or develop a custom report from your genealogy database to give you a good perspective of your research.

Consider the repository you plan to visit and the information you are likely to find there. Based on the library's holdings, choose one or two people in your family tree to research, then decide on the specific information you want to discover.

It's important to have an understanding of the types of records created at the time and place your ancestor lived so you don't waste time looking for non-existent records. If you don't know what documentary evidence was created during your ancestor's time or the government under whose jurisdiction your ancestors lived, your first order of business

*Advance preparation is essential to having research success at any library or archive.*

should be to try to determine these facts. This will help you set your expectations of the documents for which you will be searching. It will also prepare you for the possibility of a search for alternative records.

You can accomplish a substantial amount of this research from home on the Internet, using reputable websites and the historical information and bibliographic references they provide. In addition, there are excellent online historical map collections that can be used to help you check geopolitical boundaries.

Doing advance research at home will better prepare you to set your research goals and to know where and for which records to search at the library.

# 2 Use the Online Catalog

Valuable research time can be saved by using the repository's online catalog. The catalog is your access point to the library's entire collection. It has a search engine that allows you to search the vast library collection by title, author, keyword, and subject.

In addition, some libraries may have added other things to their catalogs, such as links to digitized images in their holdings and access to databases to which they subscribe or provide access. Each library's catalog will be a little different so it pays to read the Help information for the catalog and/or the library's introductory text in the catalog, on the website, or on a printed handout.

Your ability to quickly and efficiently use the online catalog, whether from home or at the repository, will make you a much more effective researcher. If you can't find what you are looking for or if your search results don't make sense, ask a member of the staff to look at them with you.

# 3 Learn the Library's Classification System

Invest some time in learning about the classification system used by the library or archives. This will provide you with an excellent foundation for working with the collections in many repositories.

The majority of public libraries use the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) method of organizing and cataloging collections. In fact, DDC is used in more than 200,000 libraries in more than 135 countries, which means that your knowledge is portable to many of the places you may wish to research.

In libraries using the DDC method, genealogical materials can be found under the 929 series, but other genealogical materials with a more historical context may be organized and shelved in other areas of the 900 series. For example, you might find the general histories of Europe, Central Europe, and Germany filed under 943, while the 970s include the general histories of North America, including Canada, the United States, and Mexico. North America–Southeastern United States is shelved under 975.

Other public libraries use a modified Dewey system for special collections. The collection at the Indian River Public Library System's main branch in Vero Beach, Florida, for example, uses a modified Dewey system that brings all the materials from the 929 series and other historical materials into the same classification and filing system. If you are searching for materials about Irish research, you will find all of the resources gathered together in one shelving area of the collection.

As you can see, if you don't know how the books are organized or if you fail to use the online catalog, it is





possible to miss an entire segment of materials important to your research.

Most academic libraries (college and university) use a different organizational scheme for their collection. They use the Library of Congress (LC) Classification System which organizes materials quite differently into classes and sub-classes. For example, you would search under Class CS to locate biographical and genealogical materials. You can compare differences between the DDC and LC organization and classification schemes on the Web.

Archives are a different story altogether. Since their collections tend to be unique, an archives may have imple-

mented a unique classification system. The National Archives and Records System (NARA) in the United States has organized materials into large groups of related materials referred to as Record Groups, and then specific groups of materials are classified in a more granular system within each group. The National Archives (TNA) in England, however, has organized its materials into classes and then sub-classes. Other archives may employ a combination of systems to manage a diverse collection. For example, an archive may use the LC system for its collection of print materials and their own system for the materials that are archived.



## 4 Ask about Materials That Aren't Cataloged

One of the first questions you may want to ask at the reference desk when you enter a library you've never visited before is: "Are there items of a historical or genealogical nature that are not in your library catalog?" Don't be surprised if the answer is yes.

Cataloging is a labor-intensive, and therefore very expensive, activity. A diverse collection of loose papers or maps stored in vertical file cabinets or map case drawers may simply be too cost-prohibitive to catalog. For example, a vast collection of papers and correspondence by a local historian in one Georgia library occupies a number of filing cabinets, yet there is not a catalog entry concerning this important collection.

## 5 Go Easy on the Library Staff

You may be surprised to learn that there are only a few colleges and universities that offer a Masters in Library Science (MLS) degree with instruction on genealogy and family history. So very few library personnel are knowledgeable about genealogical records, materials, repositories, and research. Librarians

who are familiar with genealogy tend to be genealogists themselves or have expanded their knowledge of the subject over an extended period of time.

Don't expect every library or archives employee to know genealogical research methods; it is a specialized field. But there are always some good approaches to use with librarians and archivists who know little about the methods of family history research.

- You don't need to recount your entire family history to the reference person helping you. He or she only needs limited information to help you find additional resources.
- You should, however, provide specifics about your ancestor's name, the time period in which he or she lived, and the geographical area in which he or she resided. This will help narrow the area of research.
- Be sure to tell the reference person where you have already searched for information. This will avoid a waste of both your time in covering the same territory again.
- Don't make the person have to drag information from you. If you've prepared yourself for your library visit, determined who and what you are researching, and have some realistic goals, you should be able to articulate what you are seeking.

- If you don't know the proper term for the type of document or record you want to locate, describe the type of information you are trying to ascertain. Be sure to offer any suggestions for alternative record types that you might be seeking.

Your work with the reference personnel should be a partnership. Recognize that they cannot do your research for you, but that their research expertise and knowledge of available resources may be just the information you need.

## Gather Handouts and Brochures

Most libraries with genealogical collections have pamphlets that discuss genealogical research. For example, the genealogy department at the John F. Germany Library in Tampa, Florida, has produced more than a dozen tri-fold handouts about the library's collection.

The handouts include a map of the collection's layout and a list of the DDC numbers used there. The library also has handouts

## 6





describing census and Soundex/Miracode film, immigration passenger list film, “how-to” advice for beginners, ethnic research, available CD-ROM products, and a number of other materials. In addition, brochures about genealogical and historical societies, other nearby libraries, and conferences are available.

Look for materials on shelves or in display racks, and don’t overlook a visit to the library’s website. Many libraries have placed PDF versions of their handouts online.

A great deal of thought has gone into producing authoritative information in the handouts that will introduce you to the collection’s holdings. These materials can provide you with valuable reference information. In addition, once you’ve read them, you can always ask any specific questions you may still have.

## 7 Go Beyond the Genealogy Department

Not everything you want or need for your research will be found within the genealogy department. Remember that maps, almanacs, encyclopedias, language and translation dictionaries, histories and biographies, newspaper collections, non-genealogical periodicals, and other items will be in different areas of the library.

Your ability to use the online catalog, understand the classification system, and familiarize yourself with the layout of the facility will enable you to quickly and efficiently locate, access, and use all of the resources available there.

## 8 Respect the Material

Genealogical materials are expensive and many of the items are out-of-print, fragile, or otherwise irreplaceable. Unfortunately, some libraries and archives are losing materials to theft and mishandling, and budgets for staff to supervise the collections have been cut. The result is that a number of rare and valuable items have been withdrawn from collections and made available only by appointment, if at all.

Treat each item you use with care and respect. If you notice a damaged item, bring it to the attention of the library staff. Be especially careful with microfilm, documents, the spines of books you photocopy, and the maps and loose papers you may use. You, too, are an active participant in the preservation and conservation of the library’s collections.

## 9 Don't Forget Interlibrary Loan

If you don’t find the item or book you are seeking at the library, remember that most libraries participate in a service called Inter-

library Loan (ILL), which allows one library to request material to be sent from another.

You may find that another library has a book that may be helpful to your research. Your library can initiate an ILL request to borrow a circulating item or even to photocopy a table of contents, index, or specific pages of the book for

## Learn More about Library Classification Systems

Do you want to learn the differences between the DDC and LC organization and classification systems?

Go online to [www.tnrddlib.bc.ca/dewey.html](http://www.tnrddlib.bc.ca/dewey.html) for a reference for DDC.

You’ll find an overview of the LC System at [www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsolcco/lcco/lcco.html](http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsolcco/lcco/lcco.html).

you. Your librarian can tell you how you can use ILL to extend your research reach, and can make you aware of any costs associated with the service.

Unfortunately, most material in genealogy collections are non-circulating, but some less unique materials, older editions, and duplicate copies may be placed in the circulating collection.

## Use All Available Resources

Don’t forget the full range of resources available to you in your family history research that you may not find at the library or archive. It is important not to discount or exclude anything, and you should be prepared to work all the possible resources in tandem.

Books, websites, mailing lists, courthouses, government agencies, and churches are just a few of the many resources available. Your research will need to include some or all of these resources. You may think of alternative records to search while you’re at the library, but you don’t know how to locate them. You’ll find that the reference librarian can help you locate these alternatives and check your hunches. ♡

*George G. Morgan, an internationally recognized genealogy expert, is president of the International Society of Family History Writers and Editors (ISFHWE), a director of the Genealogical Speakers Guild (GSG), and the president of Aha! Seminars, Inc. He is also the author of How to Do Everything with Your Genealogy (McGraw-Hill/Osborne, 2004).*



A surreal landscape featuring several haystacks in a field. A tall, thin ladder leans against the central haystack. A person is standing at the base of the ladder, looking up. A giant needle is positioned vertically, with its eye at the top of the frame and its point buried in the top of the central haystack. The sky is a mix of blue and white clouds.

# NEEDLES, HAYSTACKS, AND THE N

THE NEW RANKED SEARCH  
METHOD AT [ANCESTRY.COM](http://ANCESTRY.COM) IS  
A GREAT WAY TO DIG THROUGH  
LESS HAY AND FIND MORE  
PRECIOUS NEEDLES.



# NEW SEARCH AT ANCESTRY.COM

BY KENDALL HULET

**A**ncestry.com recently unveiled a new “best matches” relevance-ranked search method to add to its traditional “exact matches” search. If genealogy is like finding a needle in a haystack, you can think of this new ranked search method as a way to dig through less hay and find more of those precious needles.

This new ranked search method helps you find your ancestors quickly and easily because it brings up the best possible matches first in your list of search results. In addition, it gives you the option of performing event-based searches, meaning that you can specify a date and place of birth and/or a date and place of death in your search criteria. And, to make it even easier for you to decide where to look first, the search results page reveals more information about your matches right away. You can now see the most relevant matches from all Ancestry.com databases on the initial search results page, complete with basic information about birth, marriage, and death events.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Relevance is determined by comparing your search criteria with the information found on a genealogical record. The closer the match, the more relevant that record is to your search. Matches can be “close” in a number of different ways on genealogical records. For example, the names Johnson and Johansen are phonetically close to one another. Similarly, the names Bob and Robert are closely related as cultural variations of each other. New Hampshire is closer geographically to Maine than to California. Likewise, 1907 is closer to 1908 than to 1903 in a chronological sense.

The ranked search automatically returns alternate spellings and abbreviations for your ancestor’s name(s). An exact name match is the closest match, and therefore the most relevant, followed by name matches based on typographical, cultural, and phonetic closeness. Additionally, this search method uses chronological closeness as a factor in determining the relevance of date matches.

## EXAMPLE 1: JAMES OTHO SHARBROUGH

A ranked search for James Otho Sharbrough (born in Mississippi in 1882, died in Texas in 1936) returns three appropriate records in the top seven results. The first appropriate match (and the first on the list of possible matches) is

Search For Your Ancestors:

Exact Matches Only | **Best Matches (Ranked)** | Search Tips

Only show records that match all of these fields:

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

When Did They Live?  
Year Range: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Keyword(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Where Did They Live?  
Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Advanced Options  
All Record Types | Record Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Hide Advanced Search Options | Search

Search For Your Ancestors:

Exact Matches Only | **Best Matches (Ranked)** | Search Tips

Enter as much information as possible for best results:

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Information  
Approx. Year: \_\_\_\_\_ All Countries | Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Death Information  
Approx. Year: \_\_\_\_\_ All Countries | Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Also Lived In  
All Countries | Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Make this my default search method | Search

THE NEW RANKED SEARCH OPTION  
JOINS THE EXACT MATCHES SEARCH  
AT ANCESTRY.COM. SIMPLY CLICK  
ON THE TABS TO ALTERNATE  
BETWEEN SEARCHES.



a World War I Draft Registration record for "James Otho Sharbrough." The second appropriate match is a 1920 census record for "J O Sharbrough." The third appropriate match is a 1930 census record for "James O Sharbrough."

Notice that the relevance ranked search automatically searched for different potential abbreviations of the name James Otho Sharbrough. This means that you don't have to run three different variations of exact match searching to find these three records.

Also, notice that the birth date on James O Sharbrough (the seventh on the list of possible matches) is estimated to be 1886, whereas the search criteria was for an 1882 birth. Although the record appears to be "off" by four years, based on previous research, this is the correct James. Either James forgot his birth date or the census taker made a mistake on the census form. Because the relevance-ranked search looks for close matches in terms of chronology, the 1886 record is a good match.

You'll notice that several of the other records returned in the first seven matches of this example were for a James Scarbrough, a name that is very similar to James Sharbrough. These matches were returned because the relevance-ranked search engine automatically looks for alternate or similar name spellings.

## EXAMPLE 2: CHARLES PETER SPLONSKOWSKI

A ranked search for Charles Peter Splonskowski (born in South Dakota in 1889, died in South Dakota in 1969) returns eight appropriate records in the top ten results, the other two were actually records for Charles's spouse, Marcella. Notice that not only did this search return appropriate

name abbreviations, it also returned several records where Charles's name did not exactly match the search criteria (due to transcription errors or inaccuracy on the records), but the matches were still appropriate.

For example, a record for Charles Paul (not Peter) Splonskowski was returned from the Family Data Collection. This is the right Charles, but the source record incorrectly lists his middle name as Paul rather than Peter.

Another appropriate match is a 1920 census record for Olar P. Splonskowski. In this case, the original census record appears to read "Olar" rather than Charles. Based on other information already known about his household, this record really is for Charles.

Finally, the appropriate match from the 1930 census is for Charles Splonskoreosk. In this case, the name on the census record was incorrectly indexed on the Ancestry.com website. The relevance-ranked search was able to return misspellings and other close name matches where the other search criteria (birth date/place and death date/place) were strong matches. The records for Charles's wife, Marcella Devine, were returned because Charles was mentioned somewhere on the record.

## EXAMPLE 3: GEORGE FEULNER

A ranked search for George Feulner (born in Germany in 1856, died in Utah in 1931) yielded four appropriate records in the top five results. One of the appropriate records that was returned was for Georg (not George) Feulner, the name George originally went by in his homeland of Germany. The relevance-ranked search automatically searched for common nicknames and language variants of first names

**Ancestry.com**  
The largest collection of family history records on the web

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Narrow your search by category:  
Census 6,832 Newspapers 4,037 Court, Land, Probate 75  
Birth, Marriage, & Death 3,002 Directories 606 Reference & Finding Aids 13  
Military 450 Trees & Communities 1,933 Living People Finder  
Immigration 73 Histories 90

Records matching your search for James Otho Sharbrough in Mississippi  
18,650 matches found in All Records

Results per page: 20 1-20 18,650

Match Quality	Name	Event	Found in...	Save This	View Image
*****	James Otho Sharbrough	B: 1882 1882 D: 1 R: Not Stated, Rusk, Texas O: Rusk County	Military World War I Draft Re...	Q	Q
****	J O Sharbrough	B: 1882* R: 1920 - Roguemoire and Brockfield, Rusk, Texas	Census 1920 United States F...	Q	Q
****	James E Scarbrough	B: 1882* R: 1920 - Kerens, Navarro, Texas	Census 1920 United States F...	Q	Q
****	James E Scarbrough	B: 1881* R: 1910 - 3-PCT, NAVARRO, Texas	Census 1910 United States F...	Q	Q
****	James E Scarbrough	B: 1882* R: 1920 - Corsicana, Navarro, Texas	Census 1920 United States F...	Q	Q
****	James Eddie Scarbrough	B: Aug 1 1881 1 Aug 1881 R: Not Stated, Navarro, Texas O: Navarro County	Military World War I Draft Re...	Q	Q
****	James O Sharbrough	B: 1885* R: 1930 - Tyler, Smith, Texas	Census 1930 United States F...	Q	Q
****	Annie J Scarbrough	B: 1881* R: 1930 - Southeast, Winston, Mississippi	Census 1930 United States F...	Q	Q
****	Ed J Scarbrough	B: 1881* R: 1930 - Beat 1, Yazoo, Mississippi	Census 1930 United States F...	Q	Q
****	J W Scarbrough	B: 1883* R: 1920 - Precinct 2, Trinity, Texas	Census 1920 United States F...	Q	Q
****	J W Scarbrough	B: 1883* R: 1930 - Borger, Hutchinson, Texas	Census 1930 United States F...	Q	Q
****	J K Scarbrough	B: 1882* R: 1910 - 7 J-PCT, LEE, Texas	Census 1910 United States F...	Q	Q

## EXAMPLE 1

**Search For Your Ancestors:**

Exact Matches Only Best Matches (Ranked) ☐ ☒ Search Tips

Enter as much information as possible for best results:

James Otho Sharbrough  
First Name Last Name

**Birth Information**  
1882 United States Mississippi  
Approx. Year Country State

**Death Information**  
1936 United States Texas  
Approx. Year Country State

**Also Lived In**  
All Countries  
Country

☒ Make this my default search method

OR



## EXAMPLE 2

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Narrow your search by category:

Census 2,733 | Newspapers 1,835 | Court, Land, Probate 9  
 Birth, Marriage, & Death 1,475 | Directories 5 | Reference & Finding Aids 1  
 Military 169 | Trees & Communities 242 | Living People Finder  
 Immigration 27 | Histories 47

Records matching your search for Charles Peter Splonskowski in South Dakota  
 6,342 matches found in All Records

Results per page: 20 | 1-20 | 6,342 | Next

Match Quality	Name	Event B: Birth M: Marriage D: Death R: Residence O: Other	Found in...	Save This	View Image
*****	Charles Peter Splonskowski Mary Breitenbach Joseph Splonskowski	B: Apr 29, 1889 - Turner O: Jun 11, 1941	Birth, Marriage, & Death South Dakota Births...		
*****	Charles P Splonskowski	B: Apr 29 1889 29 Apr 1889 B: South Dakota, United States of America R: Not Stated, Turner, South Dakota O: Turner County	Military World War I Draft Re...		
*****	Charles Paul Splonskowski Marcella Grace Devine Mary Breitenbach Joseph Splonskowski	B: 29 Apr 1889 - Marion, SD D: 30 Oct 1969 - Marion, SD	Trees & Communities Family Data Collecti...		
*****	Charles Splonskowski	B: 29 Apr 1889 D: Oct 1969 - 57043, Marion, Turner, South Dakota, United States of America O: South Dakota	Birth, Marriage, & Death Social Security Deat...		
*****	Charles Paul Splonskowski Marcy Breitenbach	B: 29 Apr 1889 - Marion, Turner, South Dakota D: 30 Oct 1969 - Marion, Turner, SD, USA	Trees & Communities Millennium File		
*****	Charles Peter Splonskowski	B: 29 Apr 1889 - Marion, Turner, South Dakota D: 30 Oct 1969 - Marion, Turner, SD, USA	Trees & Communities OneWorldTree™		
*****	Olaf P Splonskowski	B: 1890* D: 1920 - Monroe, Turner, South Dakota	Census 1920 United States F...		
*****	Marcella Grace Devine	B: 17 Oct 1893 - Coon, Carroll, IA, USA D: 06 Oct 1975 - Marion, Turner, SD, USA	Trees & Communities OneWorldTree™		
*****	Marcella Grace Devine Charles Paul Splonskowski Wilhelmina Whelmina Florence Devine James E Devine	B: 17 Aug 1893 - Coon Rapids, IA D: 6 Jul 1975 - Freeman, SD	Trees & Communities Family Data Collecti...		
*****	Charles Splonskowski	B: 1890* B: South Dakota R: 1930 - Monroe, Turner, South Dakota	Census 1930 United States F...		

## EXAMPLE 3

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Narrow your search by category:

Census 3,200 | Newspapers 270 | Court, Land, Probate 9  
 Birth, Marriage, & Death 1,188 | Directories 35 | Reference & Finding Aids 10  
 Military 219 | Trees & Communities 1,190 | Living People Finder 17  
 Immigration 155 | Histories 21

Records matching your search for George Feulner in Germany  
 6,297 matches found in All Records

Results per page: 20 | 1-20 | 6,297 | Next

Match Quality	Name	Event B: Birth M: Marriage D: Death R: Residence O: Other	Found in...	Save This	View Image
*****	George Feulner	B: 1857* B: Germany R: 1920 - Precinct 5, Salt Lake, Utah	Census 1920 United States F...		
*****	George Feulner	B: 1857* B: Germany R: 1920 - Des Moines, Polk, Iowa	Census 1920 United States F...		
*****	George Feulner	B: 1857* B: Germany R: 1930 - Precinct 5, Salt Lake, Utah	Census 1930 United States F...		
*****	George Feulner	D: 30 Apr, 1931 - Salt Lake	Birth, Marriage, & Death Utah Death Index, 19...		
*****	George Feulner	B: 26 12 1856 - Unterbrumberg, Germany D: 30 04 1931 - Hunter, Salt Lake, UT, USA	Trees & Communities OneWorldTree™		
*****	George Feulner	B: 1856* B: Germany R: 1930 - Des Moines, Polk, Iowa	Census 1930 United States F...		
*****	George W Feulner	B: 1887* B: Germany R: 1920 - Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah	Census 1920 United States F...		
*****	George Feulner	B: 1856* B: Germany R: 1920 - Bremen, Cook, Illinois	Census 1920 United States F...		
*****	George Feulner	B: 1880* B: Germany R: 1920 - Mendota, LaSalle, Illinois	Census 1920 United States F...		
*****	George Feulner	B: 1860* B: Germany R: 1920 - Corinth, Saratoga, New York	Census 1920 United States F...		
*****	George Feulner	B: 1887* B: Germany R: 1930 - Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah	Census 1930 United States F...		
*****	George F Feulner	B: 1904* R: 1930 - Precinct 5, Salt Lake, Utah	Census 1930 United States F...		
*****	George Feulner	B: 1 Jan 1909 D: 10 Mar 2000 - 84120, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah, United States of America O: Utah	Birth, Marriage, & Death Social Security Deat...		
*****	George Feulner	B: 30 Aug 1886 - BRUMBERG, GERMANY D: 25 Mar 1956 - SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH	Birth, Marriage, & Death		

in order to produce this result. This means you don't have to think of every possible nickname or foreign spelling of a name in order to achieve success. In the future, Ancestry.com plans to expand this foreign spelling concept to include geographical place names. For example, a search for Germany could return place names like Deutschland.

### DON'T FORGET EXACT-MATCH SEARCHING

To get the best possible results on a ranked search, type in as much information as possible. The more search criteria the search engine has to match against, the more likely it is to pull the most appropriate records up to the top of your results list. Not sure about an exact date? Take an educated guess. As long as you're within a few years, you'll get much better results than if you leave a date field blank.

If you've filled out all of the information you possibly can on a ranked search and you still can't find the appropriate record(s), consider giving exact-match searching a try. Remember, exact-match searching functions much differently than relevance ranked searching, and thus requires a vastly different search strategy for success.

In exact-match searching, each match must exactly match all of the search terms you enter. You should probably start an exact match search with only one or two broad search criteria (e.g., a surname and a location). If you get too many results, gradually add more criteria to narrow your search. If you get too few results, drop one or more of your search criteria to broaden your search.

Although exact-match searching does not automatically search for abbreviations and alternate spellings like relevance-ranked searching, you have the option of using the Soundex feature, which returns many phonetically similar surnames. Use the Soundex feature if you wish to broaden your results. Additionally, exact-match searching supports the use of wildcards (special symbols such as the asterisk (\*) and the question mark (?) that can be used to represent an unknown letter or group of letters in a word). You can use wildcards in an exact-match search to manually hunt for alternate name spellings.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

Plans for subsequent versions of ranked search include adding more events to the advanced search form, allowing users to specify gender and maiden name to better find records for women, and adding geographical closeness as a factor in determining the relevance of location matches. All of these upgrades, coupled with the continued dedication of Ancestry.com to improve the other matching capabilities of the search engine, will ensure that the new ranked-search method will only get better with time. Good-bye hay, hello needles! ☺

*Kendall Hulet is a product manager for MyFamily.com, overseeing the Search user experience. He has written several articles for academic journals that relate to Internet business practices.*





# RESEARCH IN THE

**U**ntil 1821, most of the southwestern United States was part of Spain, then part of an independent Mexico. When the United States annexed the Republic of Texas in 1845, making it the twenty-eighth state, Mexico declared war.

The ensuing war (1846–48) saw Mexico lose large amounts of its territory in western North America, including what is now Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. What evolved in the American Southwest was a diverse and complex culture where black, white, Hispanic, and American Indian cultures would coexist and compete at the same time. It was also a place where the culture of the area would often seem out of step with the rest of the country.

For example, in New Mexico an ancient Hispanic Roman Catholicism would be the driving cultural force whereas in Arizona it would stand side by side with the Mormons to comprise the two largest denominations in the state. In both states, the White Anglo Saxon Protestant (WASP) cultural





# SOUTHWEST

norms didn't apply. Sometimes it is forgotten that in New Mexico, many of the old Spanish families arrived long before the New England or Virginia colonist set foot on American shores. Thus, Roman Catholic parish registers are the major source for tracing families back hundreds of years. Also, in the Mormon colonies scattered throughout Arizona, the pre-1890 practice of plural marriage tied the frontier fabric together in a series of intertwining families that went against the national grain.

A mixture of Hispanic, Anglo, and black society arose in Texas as Southerners received land grants from Mexico beginning in 1823. These colonists rebelled in 1835 and formed their own country, the Republic of Texas. This period has been celebrated in American history with the Battle of the Alamo as its cultural symbol. The Republic of Texas generated its own records.

In what is now Oklahoma, the society was unusually complicated because American Indians from various parts

**by Dwight A. Radford**



of the United States had been removed there by the federal government beginning in 1804 in several waves. The "Trail of Tears" became the cultural symbol to represent this tragic part of history. Until the formation of the Dawes Commission in 1893, the tribes functioned as their own governments and generated their own records. The various Indian agencies also generated records. The Dawes Commission broke up the nations by allotting individuals parcels of land and opening up formal tribal lands for settlement. Kent Carter's book *The Dawes Commission and the Allotment of the Five Civilized Tribes, 1893–1914* (Ancestry, 1999) is an excellent study of the history and repercussions of this pivotal episode in the government policies toward the native peoples.

In order to approach this complex tapestry of ethnic groups and governments, a working knowledge of history is important. Records may have originally been kept by the Spanish, Mexican, tribal, Indian agencies, Republic of Texas, U.S. territorial, U.S. federal, or state governments. The years each government was in power can help to determine what types of records need to be searched.

A working knowledge of the ethnic and religious history is also important. For example, knowing that early Protestants settling in Spanish or Mexican territories had to conform to the established Roman Catholic faith helps to explain why Protestants are found in Roman Catholic parish registers. Also, knowing that in Texas and Oklahoma most people belonged to churches that baptized adults helps to explain why a birth or christening record does not exist for most people. Similarly, knowing which American Indian tribes lived where or were removed to where can help in determining if a family may really have Native American heritage. For African American families, a working knowledge of the relationship of blacks to their white and Indian slave owners may open up records not previously considered. These and other complex factors can be identified if you read a general history or genealogical guide to the state you are working in before approaching the records.

When researching a Southwest family, if you feel like you are not quite in step with what your research experience has been in other parts of the United States, just remember that you aren't. However, frontier Southwest families, whether white, black, Hispanic, Indian, or a mixture, can provide you with some of the most colorful and interesting stories and information in your genealogy.

## ARIZONA

Genealogical research in Arizona is made easier by the large collections of the Arizona State Archives, the Arizona Historical Society, and the fact that large collections have been microfilmed and are available at the Family History Library (FHL) in Salt Lake City. Records are also starting to appear online, such as birth (1887–1928) and death records (1878–1953). See <<http://genealogy.az.gov>>.

The first European explorers in what is now Arizona came in the mid-1500s, but they only later considered it for settlement. The area was already home to many American Indians including the Apache, Hopi, and Navajo. Due to the harsh conditions and conflict with the tribes, the Spanish foothold in Arizona was isolated. The records of these tribes, which document their history and struggles, can be found at the National Archives branches in Denver and Los Angeles.

Spanish settlement included a fort at Tubac (1753) and Tucson (1775). Present-day Arizona became part of Mexico in 1821. During the Mexican-American War (1846–48) the United States acquired the land north of the Gila River. In 1853, the Gadsden Purchase, south of the Gila River was added to the territory. This was part of New Mexico Territory until Arizona Territory was created in 1863.

Some territorial settlement came by way of Cooke's Wagon Route in the south, which took settlers to the California gold fields. It was not until

1886 that the conflicts between the Apache and those involved in the ranching and mining industry ended.

A major migration of whites into Arizona came through the colonization programs of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) beginning in 1877. Webbing out from Salt Lake City, colonists were assigned areas from which to fortify their church's interest. The largest colony was in Mesa, which is today a suburb of Phoenix, and still remains predominately Mormon, as do other parts of the state. Records of Mormon Americana can be found at the FHL website at <[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)>.



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## Arizona State Archives

Department of Library, Archives,  
and Public Records  
State Capitol  
1700 W. Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
[www.lib.az.us](http://www.lib.az.us)

## Arizona Historical Society

949 E. Second Street  
Tucson, AZ 85719  
[www.ahs.state.az.us](http://www.ahs.state.az.us)

## Arizona State Genealogical Society

PO Box 47075  
Tucson, AZ 85733  
[www.rootsweb.com/~asgs/](http://www.rootsweb.com/~asgs/)

## Mesa Family History Center

41 S. Hobson Street  
Mesa, AZ 85204-1021

## Office of Vital Records

Arizona Department of Health Services  
1818 W. Adams  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
mailing: PO Box 3887  
Phoenix, AZ 85030-3887  
[www.hs.state.az.us/](http://www.hs.state.az.us/)

Arizona records begin with the Spanish period. Censuses were taken in 1801 by the Spanish (Pimeria Alta), Mexico in 1831 (Santa Cruz County) and 1852 (Pimeria Alta), and territorial enumerations for 1864, 1866, and 1882. The first federal census schedule was in 1860 (Arizona County). As land opened up in 1863, land offices were established from which mining claims, homestead claims, and grazing lands were dispersed.

Records are at the BLM Arizona office in Phoenix as well as the National Archives—Southwest Region. The county recorders kept subsequent land records. Probate-related materials were filed with the clerk of each county's superior court, with various territorial, state, county, and municipal courts handling civil and criminal cases.

As the railroads began crossing the territory linking Albuquerque, New Mexico, and San Bernardino, California, more settlers arrived in Arizona. Large-scale settlement in Arizona didn't occur until after statehood in 1912, with the metropolis of Phoenix emerging as a major western city with sprawling suburbs. Today, Arizona is a major tourist

destination and retirement mecca. Its population remains a mixture of white, black, Hispanic, and American Indian.

## NEW MEXICO

The first place to start in the search for New Mexico records is the New Mexico State Records and Archives. It is at this repository that records from the Spanish, Mexican, territorial, and state periods can be found. For example, New Mexico did not begin statewide registration of births and deaths until 1919, so to fill in the gap the archives has on microfilm the Roman Catholic parish registers from the Archdiocese of Santa Fe and Gallup. The archives also house many county records and district court records.

An excellent guide to the records of the state is Karen Stein Daniel's *Genealogical Resources in New Mexico* (2d ed. Albuquerque, New Mexico: New Mexico Genealogical Society, 2002). Also to be considered are the local records generated by the county governments. These often include documents from the Mexican and territorial periods, as well as marriages, land, tax, probate, and court records.





## New Mexico State Records and Archives

1205 Camino Carlos Rey  
Santa Fe, NM 87507  
[www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/](http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/)

## New Mexico Department of Health

1105 South Saint Francis Drive  
Santa Fe, NM 87502-6110  
mailing: New Mexico Vital Records  
PO Box 26110  
Santa Fe, NM 87502  
[www.dohewbs2.health.state.nm.us/Vital-  
Rec/Vital%20records.htm](http://www.dohewbs2.health.state.nm.us/Vital-Rec/Vital%20records.htm)

## New Mexico Genealogical Society

PO Box 8283  
Albuquerque, NM 87198-8283  
[www.nmgs.org](http://www.nmgs.org)

## Historical Society of New Mexico

PO Box 1912  
Santa Fe, NM 87504  
[www.hsnm.org](http://www.hsnm.org)



It is important to understand that because of New Mexico's history and cultural dynamics, many of the old Spanish families can be documented from 1598. By 1679, the Hispanic population was about 2,500, with a Pueblo Indian population of about 17,000. The Spanish and American Indians commonly intermarried.

In 1680, the Pueblo revolted against the Spanish, who subsequently reconquered and recolonized New Mexico (1692–97). From 1700, land grants were provided to Hispanic settlers, and by 1796, almost 36,000 ranchers and farmers were living in the Rio Grande valley. When Mexico gained independence in 1821, the native population also became citizens.

The Mexican-American War (1846–48) saw the area of New Mexico annexed into the United States and made into a territory in 1850. As there was already an old and established population, this meant that records, such as land claims, were generated from which the rights of ownership were reestablished under the United States government.

Not only are land records important but researchers will also want to check local and government censuses and so-called "census substitutes" such as tax rolls, military or troop lists and musters, distribution lists, school censuses, voter lists, and juror lists. Together, the church and civil records can help to reconstruct a family.

Censuses, often local in nature, can document residents of all ethnic groups. There were periodic Spanish and Mexican censuses (1750–1845), and these have been published by the New Mexico Genealogical Society. The first enumeration under the United States was in 1850.

The mining and ranching industries attracted large numbers of immigrants and other Americans. New Mexico entered the union with a population of 300,000 in 1912. The creation of the Los Alamos project during World War II brought jobs and the atomic bomb to the state's history. Today, New Mexico remains a diverse cultural community where the majority white, Hispanic, and Native American lifestyles intersect and draw on each other.

## OKLAHOMA

From 1890 until statehood in 1907, Oklahoma, as it is known today, was comprised of two territories: Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory. The nations of the Five Civilized Tribes (Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole) became Indian Territory in 1890. Settlers were confined to Oklahoma Territory although some white settlers were allowed in the Indian Territory, with permission of the particular nation. There is an 1890 territorial census for the Oklahoma Territory portion. These two areas were



combined in 1907 and admitted to the Union as the state of Oklahoma.

The two areas share a complex history where Native American, black, and white cultures and concerns both coexisted and conflicted with each other. In the Indian Territory, various tribes with little or nothing in common were forced to live together when, in the end, their tribal lands were stripped from them. Also emerging out of this cultural stew was a mixed-race population threading itself through-out all three. Black slaves were originally brought into the area by their Indian owners and some were eventually recognized as citizens of one of the five civilized tribes.

Begin research into all kinds of Oklahoma genealogy at the Oklahoma Historical Society. This repository has one of the largest and finest collections of Native American collections in the United States. The NARA branches in Kansas City, Fort Worth, and Washington, D.C., also hold a wealth of information on Oklahoma residents. Parts of the collections from these repositories have also been microfilmed and are available at the FHL. For records generated by the state government, as well as copies of government land surveys, consult the Oklahoma State Archives.

A tool for learning more about Oklahoma and Indian Territory records is Bradford Koplowitz's *Guide to the Historical Records of Oklahoma* (Heritage Books, 1997), which provides an inventory of the public records by county and by city and town.

The United States government began the process of removing tribes from the east to the open spaces west of the Mississippi River in 1804 with the largest removals from 1825 to 1842. Although some sixty-five tribes were settled in the Indian Territory, the largest were the southeastern Five Tribes: Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole nations. This relocation saw the building of towns, forts, schools, and government infrastructures within these nations. During the Civil War, tribal members fought for both sides, although the Confederacy was heavily favored.

It was in Oklahoma Territory that farmers, ranchers, railroad workers, the military, and general settlers were legally permitted to live, being banned from Indian Territory. By 1880 settlers were looking illegally toward Indian Territory for new lands. When the government opened up "unassigned" lands on 22 April 1889, a stampede of homesteaders

## OKLAHOMA

### Oklahoma Genealogical Society

PO Box 12986  
Oklahoma City, OK 73157  
[www.rootsweb.com/~okgs/](http://www.rootsweb.com/~okgs/)

### Oklahoma Historical Society

2100 N. Lincoln Blvd  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
[www.ok-history.mus.ok.us/](http://www.ok-history.mus.ok.us/)


### Oklahoma State Archives and Records Management

Oklahoma Department of Libraries  
Allen Wright Memorial Library Building  
200 Northeast 18th Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3298  
[www.odl.state.ok.us/oar/](http://www.odl.state.ok.us/oar/)

### Vital Records Service

State Department of Health  
1000 Northeast 10th Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73117  
[www.health.state.ok.us/](http://www.health.state.ok.us/)





rushed in but were met by illegal settlers already there. This complicated the homesteading process. By the 1890s, the government forced the tribes to give up their nations by allotting individuals parcels of ground. The Dawes Commission was set up in 1893 to register these allotments and to change the society from the tribal governments to a territorial government.

Many records were generated by the counties, the tribes, and the Indian agencies. Collections of these can be found at the Oklahoma Historical Society, the FHL, and locally at county courthouses. The state did not begin recording births and deaths until 1908, and this didn't become mandatory until 1917. Prior to 1908, births and deaths can be found through the various Indian agency records and in the denominations who theologically had a reason to keep records of birth and christenings. Marriages are registered with the county and agency governments. Marriage records can also be found in the records of the five civilized tribes. These often include marriages between members of the specific tribe and whites (usually noted as U.S. citizens).

The oil boom of the 1930s saw prosperity come to Oklahoma just as the dust bowl saw massive economic destruction and immigration to California. Today, Oklahoma is a mixture of urban and rural with Tulsa and Oklahoma City as major American metropolitan areas, and small towns still dotting the landscape.

## TEXAS

Texas is the second largest state in the nation. It consists of many varied cultures each with their own history and interests. These cultures have created various and often unique record sources from the Spanish period (1682–1821), Mexican period (1821–36), Republic of Texas period (1836–45), and statehood in 1845.

All of these historic periods saw records generated, such as church registers, land claims, court records, and military records. As counties were formed in Texas, the local government continued the record-keeping process with vital, land, probate, court, and tax records. In Texas county government, the county clerk performs duties that in other states would be divided among several offices. The county clerk registers a wide variety of documents from deeds to marriage licenses to cattle brands. Because of the complex development of the modern state of Texas, a knowledge of its history is very helpful.


An excellent place to start the search for a Texas ancestor is at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission in Austin. This archive holds records from the various historical periods, records generated by the state, map collections, military records, voter lists, directories, and newspapers, as well as microfilm of many county records. For online information of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, visit [www.tsl.state.tx.us/](http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/).

Texas is also home to the National Archives–Southwest Region repository in Fort Worth, which houses, among other things, federal, Indian, and military records for Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana. The FHL also has a large collection of Texas county records with copies of its microfilm available at the state archives.


Texas research is such a vast and diverse topic that one research guide could not possibly cover all the topics and situations encountered by genealogists. An excellent work that can be used as a launching point is Imogene Kinard Kennedy and J. Leon Kennedy's *Genealogical Records in Texas* (Genealogical Publishing Co., 1987). This work has historical maps, a Spanish-English word list, a short synopsis on record types, and a short section on each county. Another guide is Carolyn R. and Joe E. Ericson's *A Guide to Texas Research* (Ericson Books, 1994).

The first permanent European settlement in what is now Texas was founded in 1682 when a Spanish town was founded near El Paso. It remained Spanish until Mexican independence in

1821. In 1823, the Mexican government made a "First Contract" with Stephen Austin so American colonists could be brought into the area. Southerners from the southeastern United States flocked into the area, and by 1832 some 20,000 had arrived. By 1835, they had rebelled against Mexico and achieved independence in 1836 when they founded the Republic of Texas. Independence lasted until the American annexation in 1845. This caused Mexico to declare war



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YOUR FAMILY HISTORY.**







### **Texas State Genealogical Society**

Library: part of the Texas State Library  
[www.rootsweb.com/~txsgs/](http://www.rootsweb.com/~txsgs/)

### **National Archives—Southwest Region**

501 Felix Street, Building 1  
PO Box 6216  
Fort Worth, TX 76115  
[www.archives.gov/facilities/tx/fort\\_worth.html](http://www.archives.gov/facilities/tx/fort_worth.html)

### **Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center**

650 FM 1011  
PO Box 310  
Liberty, TX 77575  
[www.tsl.state.tx.us/](http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/)  
This is a part of the Texas State Library  
and Archives Commission.

### **Texas Department of Health**

1100 West 49th Street  
Austin, TX 78756-3199  
[www.tdh.state.tx.us/default.htm](http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/default.htm)

### **Texas State Library and Archives Commission**

Lorenzo De Zavala State Archives and  
Library Building  
1201 Brazos Street  
PO Box 12927  
Austin, TX 78711  
[www.tsl.state.tx.us/](http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/)

against the United States and thousands of Texans enlisted on the American side.

In 1861, Texas seceded from the Union and became part of the Confederate States of America, creating more records about the Texans. It was readmitted to the Union in 1870. At about this time the remaining Indian tribes removed northward to Indian Territory, leaving scattered and often mixed-blood families to coexist with the larger white, black, and Hispanic population.

While the broad prairies of south, east, and southwest Texas were being settled by ranchers prior to the Civil War, Texas was impoverished at the conclusion of the war. The cattle industry became the catalyst to reconstruct and further develop the state. Texas would go on to become the leading producer of beef in the nation during the 1870s and 1880s as trails crisscrossed the state leading to other national markets. It was the introduction of barbed wire and sheep to Texas that began the decline of the cattle empires resulting in range wars.

With the railroads linking the state during the last quarter of the nineteenth century came an influx of immigrants and settlers. By 1900, the development within the state was largely industrial and agricultural with Texas taking on its modern character by 1920. Of all the transformations to occur within the Texas landscape it was the petroleum and natural gas industry that has continued to provide unimaginable wealth to the economy. The twentieth century saw once moderate-sized cities such as Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio develop into huge metropolitan areas. ♀

*Dwight A. Radford is a professional genealogist residing in Salt Lake City, Utah. He specializes in Irish and Irish immigrant research and is co-author of the book A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering Your Irish Ancestor (Betterway Books, 2001). He is also a contributing author to the third edition of Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources (Ancestry, 2004).*

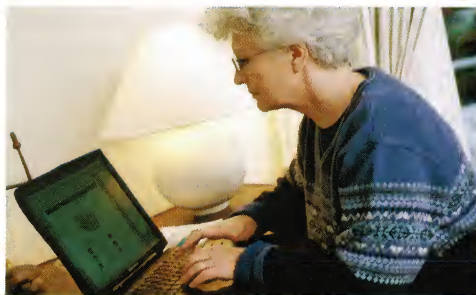






Doing research on the Web is like using a library assembled piecemeal by pack rats and vandalized nightly.

—Roger Ebert



# Why Isn't It on the Internet?

by Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens, CGRS, CGL

Everything is on the Internet. Isn't that what you've heard? Many media reports on genealogy would lead you to believe that you can research your entire ancestry on the Internet, without leaving the comfort of your home. While it is true that more and more productive research can be accomplished on the Web, the reality is that many of the documents we need to enrich our family history are still only located in the stacks of archives.

## Different Types of Researchers

Traditional access to archival holdings by researchers has been on-site at an archive, with assistance and context provided by an archivist. For researchers working on in-depth projects, this method of access could require days or weeks on-site, depending on the size of the collection and the extent of the project. The researcher would likely have had to communicate with the archive to determine its holdings, as the finding aids were also only at the archive.

The widespread popularity of the Web in recent years seems to have divided researchers into two distinctly different camps. Traditional researchers, such as those described above, look to the Web to provide

new tools for access to archives, such as finding aids and indexes to collections. These researchers have typically received some sort of training that has instilled in them the value of looking at primary documents in the context of their collection. For example, the Reuther Library has some 313 finding aids on its website since its primary audience is interested in finding aids online. Many archival institutions have similarly placed finding aids online, to assist researchers in effectively planning their research trips.

The new breed of Internet researchers has an expectation that they will be able to find everything on the Web, from fully indexed collections to actual digital images of whatever they seek. Sometimes they are able to find these types of collections, but more often than not, the collections they seek have not been digitized. These researchers typically have not received training in the use of archival materials, but generally are looking to find their ancestors—fast.

Companies like Ancestry.com and ProQuest have been actively digitizing and indexing the most popular sources for genealogical research, from censuses to newspapers to passenger lists. These subscription sites have dramatically improved much of the early phase



of ancestral research and leave Internet researchers hungry for more.

## To Digitize or Not to Digitize

Many institutions are now either in the midst of digitizing projects or are researching the possibilities. One of the main arguments against placing digital collections on the Web is the reality that researchers will not benefit from the assistance available in an archive because there will be no archivist to provide context to the records.

In her book, *Why Digitize?* (Council on Library and Information Resources, 1999), Abby Smith states, "Some of the drawbacks of digital technology for access, as for preservation, stem from the technology's uncanny ability to represent the original in a seemingly authentic way. Working with digital surrogates can distort the research experience

Digital technology can be a valuable instrument to enhance learning and extend the reach of information, but only as an addition to an already well-stocked tool kit.

somewhat by taking research materials out of the context of the reading room."

Not all researchers need assistance with context. But they may need assistance if digital collections are placed on the Web as individual pages rather than as part of a cohesive collection, as you might find on microfilm or with original records.

One of the main advantages of placing digital images on the Web, if it is done properly, is the access researchers have to collections stored remotely. This access is enhanced if the digital collections are indexed and the indexes are linked to digital copies of the original records, as are most of the census collections on Ancestry.com. The experience is more profoundly valuable to the researcher if links to like collections on other websites are included within the context of an online collection.

Archives considering digital projects may believe there will be cost savings and other internal benefits, but that has

not proved to be the case. Instead, an increased work load for digitally processing a collection is one tangible problem being encountered.

Leon J. Stout, former president of the Society of American Archivists, says, "Just as we learned with microfilm, mediating access through technology does not save the archives any work—collections must still be processed and described, and then, in addition, converted to another format, in this case, digitized" (Reimagining Archives: Two Tales for the Information Age, *The American Archivist* 65 [Spring/Summer 2002]: 14).

## Access

The issue of access is perhaps the most complicated for those looking to place collections online. It is not a matter of "if you build it, they will come." Archives websites have to be planned carefully to provide the user with a meaningful experience. Just placing finding aids on a website, without providing proper links and explanations, and key words to aid in searching, will provide the same benefit as not placing finding aids there at all.

However, when researchers can access finding aids online, they may ultimately be able to save archives staffs time, both in person and by reducing the number of e-mail, telephone, or mail requests.

## Preservation

There is great debate in archival literature about the value of preserving primary sources digitally. Some say that digital imaging is not preservation. Since the 1930s, the federal government and many institutions have been using microfilm to preserve primary documents. In some cases, such as census records, the originals were microfilmed and then destroyed or sent to other institutions for safekeeping. It has been thought that microfilm would last up to 500 years, but those expectations have been seriously diminished by the chemicals used in the various generations of microfilm.

The Genealogical Society of Utah of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) has been microfilming original records worldwide since the 1930s. The Church discovered several problems with the microfilm along the way.

"The original microfilms used in the late 1930s, and for a decade or two after, were found to emit a flammable gas as they aged. Spontaneous combustion was a real possibility. Consequently, the LDS Church switched to acetate-based microfilm materials as soon as they became available. Acetate does not create dangerous gases. For safety reasons, the older microfilms were copied to the newer technology films," writes Dick Eastman (*Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter*, 24 November 2003).





The acetate films, however, started to scratch and become brittle after a couple of decades, so the Church switched to acetone-based microfilm. These should withstand the test of time. However, the microfilm cameras used in filming are becoming scarce, as are the parts to fix the machines. The digital imaging craze has all but eradicated the need for new microfilm cameras, so they are no longer being made.

This has forced the LDS Church to look at digitization as a preservation technique. The Church is now sending scanning teams to locations that have agreed to allow it to “film” previously unfiled collections.

“The best part of the plan is in the ease of replication. Making a copy of a microfilm introduces fuzziness, or ‘visual noise.’ However, a copy of a digital image is identical to the original. You can make copies of copies of copies; each new image is identical to the original with no signal loss,” continues Eastman.

The primary purpose of the LDS Church in digitizing collections is to allow its vast user base access to data for family history research in their homes. The Church does put some collections online.

It should be noted that the LDS Church has made archival collections available on microfilm to genealogists for years, and these collections come with no archivist interpreter and lack the archival environment. It’s up to the genealogist to make sense of the data found.

## Selection Criteria

Digital collections are appearing online with more and more rapidity. How does a library or archive make the decision on what to digitize and place online?

In the case of the Vigo County (Indiana) Public Library, the decision was based on a collection that was frequently requested but only had limited availability on microfilm. The library received a grant specifically for digitizing the Vigo County marriage records from 1931 to 1951. After deciding the exact method for digitization, the records were indexed for better access on the Web. The project was so successful that the library received another grant to digitize selected local history pamphlets and books.

In another project, selection criteria seems less relevant than making all “ancient” records widely avail-



able to the public via the Internet. The Alachua County, Florida, Clerk of the Circuit Court provided the vision to allow “public access to the county’s records via the Internet, and to streamline and improve the delivery of services to the constituency.” (George G. Morgan, “Low Budget, High-Tech Genealogy,” *Genealogical Computing* 22 [Oct/Nov/Dec 2002]: 15-20.)

In some cases, the county records have been indexed and are available online in a searchable database, such as the “Marriage License Search, 1837–May 1973.” (See <[www.clerk-alachua-fl.org/Archive/Ancient/anmarrsearch2.cfm](http://www.clerk-alachua-fl.org/Archive/Ancient/anmarrsearch2.cfm)>.)

Archives may use frequency of requests as a criterion for a digitization project.

“Scanning for our needs opens the door to scanning for patron needs. Frequently now, users request copies of photographs and document images in scanned form to be e-mailed to them or placed on FTP sites for downloading,” writes Stout in his article for *The American Archivist*.

Copyright and donor permission issues may preclude some collections from being considered for digitization and Web placement. Archivists have to ensure that all legal questions surrounding a collection are resolved before moving forward on such a project.

## Funding

In an era of across-the-board funding constraints, how do archives find money for Web projects? In some cases,

the money isn’t available. In other cases, creative funding is needed and dependent upon the urgency of placing collections online. In the Vigo County, Indiana, library project discussed earlier, three separate grants were received to allow the library to follow through on its project. The Alachua County initiative was handled differently. No special funding was procured. The most valuable resources for that project were the two individuals responsible for making it happen, who also effectively used an army of volunteers to index their projects.

There are other funding issues that must be considered, such as hardware and software upgrades, compatibility, and security.

“While the need for archives to guarantee our rights and hold our government accountable to its citizenry doesn’t diminish, the cultural uses of archives will continually increase—and it’s via the Web that people will seek that information. So the archives doesn’t disappear—all of that content has to be somewhere—we just will do much more of our business for remote researchers, and this does have implications for how we spend our resources and our time at work,” says Stout.

## Looking Toward the Future

What does the future hold for archives and the Internet? The volume of finding aids and digital collections will continue to grow exponentially on the Web. Researchers will continue to demand more and more content online, but they will also have to realize some of the inherent dangers in the data available.

As Smith so eloquently states in her book, “Digital technology can, indeed, prove to be a valuable instrument to enhance learning and extend the reach of information resources to those who seek them, wherever they are, but only if we develop it as an addition to an already well-stocked tool kit, rather than a replacement for all of those tools which generations before us have ingeniously crafted and passed on to us in trust.”

*Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens, CGRS, CGL, is the managing editor of Genealogical Computing and a frequent contributor to Ancestry Magazine.*





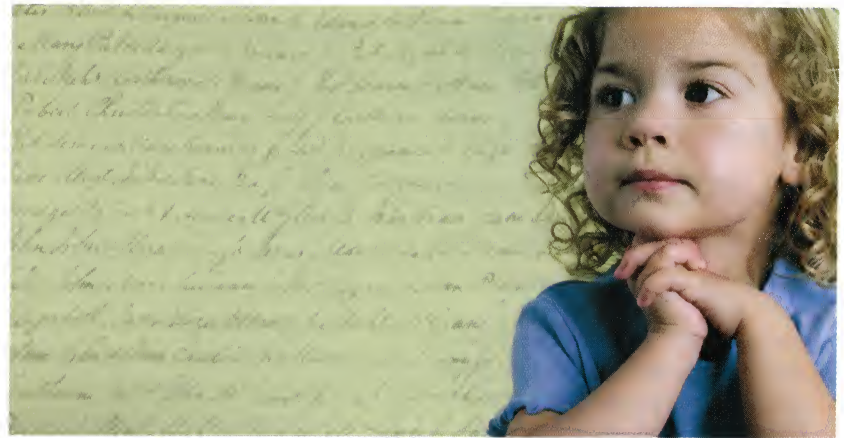
**E**very recreational activity, whether it is a sport such as golf or a hobby such as genealogy, has certain fundamental elements that must be understood and practiced. Without mastering these fundamentals, an individual cannot expect to have much success with the activity.

When it comes to genealogy, birth records are among the most basic elements of the hobby. These records constitute the very fabric from which generational links are determined, and they are the foundation upon which an entire research project is based. Birth records, along with marriage and death records, are three of the most important records for genealogical research. They are known as vital records. Every researcher should be proficient in the use of these records.

Birth records have been around for centuries. Unfortunately, they have not been kept continuously nor have they been kept uniformly. For the most part, Western European countries began recording births for the general population (royal families were always well-documented) in the sixteenth century. These recordings were usually a responsibility of the church that was predominant in a particular area. Many of these early birth records, however, have not survived.

In the United States, it wasn't until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that birth records were kept consistently by civil government. Even then, there is no guarantee that these more modern records are available.

The farther back in time your research takes you, the less likely that you will be able to find a birth record. And the older the record you do manage to locate, the less genealogical information you are likely to find. In many states, a birth record contains only the most basic information. For some periods of time and in some areas, you could expect to find the name of the child, the date of birth, the exact place of birth, the name of the



## Birth Record Basics

by Terry and Jim Willard

father, age of the father at the time of the birth, name of the mother (sometimes maiden name), age of mother at the time of birth, and number of births for the mother.

### Access

Birth records are generally kept at the level of government closest to the location of the event. In most states in the United States, this is at the county level. However, in some areas, these records are the responsibility of the city or town. And in Louisiana, birth records are kept at the parish level.

Other levels of government may keep a copy of the birth record, depending on when the state started keeping such records. In many states, a duplicate copy of a birth record is submitted to a state office.

Birth records are often the most difficult to access due to privacy and right-to-know laws. It might be necessary to prove your identity to get a copy of your own birth record. Likewise, you might be required to prove how you are related to the individual in question if you are after the birth record of a relative or ancestor.

Local government agencies (state and/or county) usually have a form

that must be completed to request a copy of a birth record. Be certain to complete all the information that is required. An incomplete application can delay your request.

The government agency responsible for the records usually charges a fee for a copy of the record. This fee varies greatly so it is necessary to do some research to determine the exact cost. A phone call to the proper office or a visit to that office's website should provide the information you are seeking.

Government agencies might do a search for you but with restrictions, such as within a date range. In most cases this is spelled out on the application form. If you are unsure of an approximate date, additional research will be required before the agency will help you search for a birth record.

### Other Possibilities

There are always alternative records to search for birth information. Census records, military records, family Bibles, and life insurance policies often contain much-needed birth information.

Another potential source of information is a local newspaper. At least during the twentieth century, it was not unusual for a paper to publish



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	Date of death	28 Aug 1908
	Age at death	80
	Cause of death	Coronary Occlusion
3	<b>Mary Jane McGonigley</b>	
	Date of death	13 Nov 1907
	Age at death	65
	Cause of death	Senile Dementia
4	<b>Grace Hawthorne Reynolds</b>	
	Date of death	26 Jan 1984
	Age at death	80
	Cause of death	Prostateitis

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714-970-7040  
Fax: 714-970-6573

birth announcements giving the date of birth and the names of the parents. If you do not have an idea of when a particular ancestor's birth occurred, it is best to scour these alternative sources.

Many religious organizations record life events shortly after a birth (with baptism and christening records) that might help estimate the actual birth date. The real difficulty with these potential sources is that the records quite often traveled with the minister. When he or she left for a new congregation, the records went along as well. It might be possible, though, to locate some records through the national office of a particular denomination.

At times, the record of the birth was recorded after the birth. And in some cases, this could have been long after the birth actually occurred. This is known as a delayed birth record. Delayed birth records are recorded later in life when a person needs proof of birth for insurance, passports, Social Security, or other benefits.

In our own research, we have encountered several examples of delayed birth records. The birth information for Charles Morse Willard was taken from a page of the town's birth records, which were not in any type of order—chronological or alphabetical. Fortunately for us, there was a good index to the town's birth records.

Proof of birth was sometimes required for certain government programs. In the absence of a birth certificate (due to fire, flood, or other natural disaster) other means should be employed to prove the birth, such as sworn affidavits. When Jim's

grandmother, Jennie Louise Jones, applied for Social Security, she had no birth certificate because the town office in the small town she was from burned to the ground. She had to get notarized statements as to her existence and recognized date of birth from Jim's grandfather to support her application.

### How to Obtain a Birth Record

1. Determine the town, city, or county in which the birth occurred. For recent births in your family, this

**When it comes to  
genealogy, birth  
records are among the  
most basic elements  
of the hobby.**

should be easy because you probably already know where the birth occurred. But for a birth that happened in the more distant past, some additional research might be necessary. This can be the difficult part of the process.

2. Determine when that locality began keeping birth records. There are usually several excellent sources in the genealogical reference section of your local library, such as the new revised edition of *Red Book: American State, County, and Town Resources* (Ancestry, 2004). Or you may want to use an Internet search engine to research the city or town for the same information.
3. FamilySearch, Ancestry.com, and other popular genealogy websites often have vital records online



as well. Be sure you do your Internet research along with your onsite research.

4. Determine which office within that locality is responsible for maintaining birth records. Again, this information can be found in your local library or by doing a search online.
5. Determine what forms need to be completed in order to request a copy of a birth record.
6. Determine what method of payment the locality will accept (checks, money orders, credit cards) and to whom checks or money orders should be made payable. Under no circumstances should you mail cash.
7. Write to the appropriate office to have your request filled. Be sure

you type or print all names and addresses in the letter.

8. Give the following facts when writing for birth records: a) full name of person whose record is being requested, b) sex, c) parents' names, including maiden name of mother, d) month, day, and year of birth or death, e) place of birth or death, and name of hospital if known, f) purpose for which copy is needed, and g) relationship to person whose record is being requested.

The more information you provide, the easier it will be for the individual locating the birth record to know that it is the correct one.

9. Wait patiently for the copy of the birth record to arrive at your home. This may take from four to six weeks.

10. Place the valuable document into an archival quality "jacket" for safekeeping. It will be a valuable addition to your collection of family documents supporting your research.

Genealogy is a hobby that requires planning, research, diligence, patience, and meticulous paperwork. It is a great deal of work. But it is certainly worth it when you finally locate a primary source document such as a birth certificate! ✍

*Terry and Jim Willard hosted the ten-part PBS Ancestors series. They have researched their family history fifteen generations back on both sides.*

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# VITAL RECORDS

## *in the Past and Future*

by Donn Devine, CG, CGI

**V**ital records—the certificates recorded in local or state vital statistics offices—have traditionally been the first original records sought by newcomers to family history once they have exhausted home sources and the recollections of living relatives. Unfortunately, access to these records is becoming more and more restricted at the very time when they have become most significant for family history.

Vital records are the single most reliable source for information about the key events in the lives of our ancestors—the events that earlier were only recorded, if at all, in family Bibles or church records. Parents and children of people named in vital records can usually still obtain them, but access is becoming ever more restricted in response to growing concerns over privacy and identity theft.

Vital records are the government-required registrations of births, deaths, marriages, divorces, and adoption name changes. In countries where civil government offices were established to keep records that earlier were the responsibility of state churches, they are known as civil registrations.

Most vital or civil registration records contain sufficient individual information, such as names, ages, and birthplaces of parents, to distinguish a record from those of others with the same name. However, they contain nothing that identifies the record positively with any particular person—no photograph, fingerprint, DNA profile, list of identifying marks, or other characteristics. This is ironic in view of the widespread acceptance of a birth certificate as evidence that the person holding it is the person named in it! In fact, birth certificates have no identifying value whatsoever, yet their misuse as a means of identification has been one of the principal justifications recently cited for limiting their availability.

Like other records we use for genealogical research, the content of vital and civil records will vary with both the jurisdiction and the period in which it originated. The discussion here focuses on U.S. records and their development. Similar trends are found in other jurisdictions, but the specifics will need to be sought out for particular localities and periods of interest.

Before we look at vital records in detail, it is important to understand the two different meanings for the word “certificate.” It is used first for the original certification that an event took place—the signed certificate of an attending physician or midwife, funeral director, or an officiating church or judicial officer that is filed in the registration office. “Certificate” in its second sense is used for the certified copies of original registrations, which are issued by the vital records registrar on payment of a fee.

More accurately, these are certificates of registration and of the authenticity of the copy or abstract, not of the event itself. In the recent past, the certificates issued by registration officers have usually been in the form of a photocopy of all or part of the original, with the registrar’s certificate of authenticity and seal appended. Earlier, they were typed or handwritten transcriptions from the original, certified and sealed.

In the future, as electronic filing becomes the norm, there will be no typed or signed originals, and we can expect the certified copies to be in the form of computer-generated forms, authenticated by the registrar’s certificate and seal. Only the original certificate on file in the registration office will be an original record. The certificates issued by the office, although they contain primary information and are acceptable as evidence of the original, will be considered derivative records, not original.

Like so many other records useful in family history, vital records did not originate with genealogy in mind. In the United States, vital registration began in Massachusetts in 1639, followed soon thereafter by the other New England colonies. In the rest of the country, vital registration didn’t begin until the nineteenth century, when a number of cities began to require death and later birth registration, a movement led by physicians interested in public health. New York City was



the first to require death registrations beginning in 1803. Emphasis was on reporting circumstances and cause of death, and insuring sanitary disposition of remains.

A national system of vital registration (although still conducted by the individual states) did not exist until the first half of the twentieth century. In Europe, civil registration began in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, as new centralized national governments sought to learn the makeup of their often far-flung and fragmented domains without being dependent on church officials to keep the records.

### National Registration Areas

Physicians associated with the U.S. Bureau of the Census began collecting health-related data with the 1850 population census and proposed that the states collect data on a current basis to update the periodic census snapshots of public health. The first step toward building a national system while relying on the individual states to do the registering began in 1880, when the Census Bureau established the "National Death Registration Area."

To be admitted to the Registration Area, a state or city had to have a workable law requiring collection of death data, and achieve a ninety percent compliance level. The registration area started off with the states of Massachusetts and New Jersey, the District of Columbia, and nineteen cities. By 1900, it had expanded to include ten states—the six New England states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine, together with New York, New Jersey, Michigan, Indiana, and the District of Columbia. Five more states were added by 1906—Colorado, California, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota.

Acceptance of the need for birth registrations came more slowly as the immediate association with public health was not as apparent to the pub-

lic or to legislators as were the causes and circumstances of death. Although a National Birth Registration Area had been proposed earlier, it was not established until 1915 and initially included only ten states and the District of Columbia. It was not until 1933 that all of the states were admitted to both the death and birth registration areas.

Bringing states into the Marriage Registration Area, established in 1957, and one for Divorce, in 1958, proved even more difficult. When national collection of detailed marriage and divorce data was halted in 1996 for budget-

**Family history  
research as we know  
it will be vastly  
changed if current  
trends continue on  
closing records.**



ary reasons, only forty-one states had joined the Marriage Area, and thirty-one had joined the Divorce Area. The participating states still collect detailed information on the standard certificate forms, but they now send only summary data to the federal government. Many states also have a second series of marriage records maintained by marriage license offices.

### Standard Certificates and Model Laws

In 1900, the Census Bureau recommended standard certificates for birth and death registration for each state to use, and with input from a number of interested private health-related organizations, published a model state registration law that each state could enact. Since then, the certificates and model laws have been revised periodi-

cally by a succession of federal agencies responsible for collecting health statistics, currently the National Center for Health Statistics, part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the Department of Health and Human Services.

The periodic revisions reflect the growing importance of statistical data for public health. The standard birth and death certificate forms now in use were promulgated in 1989; new versions were approved late in 2003 and have been recommended to the states for adoption. The current edition of the recommended state legislation, Model State Vital Statistics Law and Regulations (1995), replaced a 1977 edition. It is the source for the longer closure periods—100 years for births and fifty years for deaths and marriages—that a number of states have recently enacted, making research into the recent past difficult for family historians. Genealogical community representatives were on the working group that developed the 1995 edition, but their recommendations on public access were completely rejected.

### Birth Certificates

Elements common to birth registrations worldwide are the name of the child, the date and place of birth, the names of the parents when known, and the name of the person filing the information. Beyond that minimum, there may be nothing else, or there may be a considerable body of useful genealogical information.

Some of the health data on earlier certificates is useful in determining family structure and interpreting census records—information like number of previous pregnancies, live births, and living children.

Less useful genealogically, but perhaps useful for indicating the level of health care available to the family, would be information on the preventive treatment administered to prevent neonatal blindness. Starting with the



1949 standard certificate, such information, with many additional questions, has been relegated to a lower section of the certificate, "for health and medical use only," and labeled "confidential" in later revisions. It is not reproduced in the photocopies certified and issued to applicants.

The 1989 revision now used in most states is two pages long and revised to include a lengthy list of maternal and infant risk factors in the confidential health section. That data is combined with death certificate data for all infants who die before age one, using new data items added to the 1989 death certificate form, to produce the Linked Birth and Infant Death (LBID) database. Through it, causes of infant death can be associated with the risk factors present during pregnancy or at birth.

The latest (2003) birth certificate revision reduces to the top quarter of the first page the essential elements of name, date, time and place of birth, parents' names, city or town or residence, and state of birth. These are the familiar elements we have come to look for on issued certificates of birth registration.

A new administrative section, to be kept confidential like the health information on the rest of the page and the one following, includes the mother's mailing address, social security numbers of both parents, whether a number has been requested for the child, and whether the mother was married at any time during the pregnancy, and if not, whether the father had signed an acknowledgment of paternity at the hospital. The confidential health information section also includes information about both parents' education, and some new questions related to health risks.

## Death Certificates

In U.S. death certificates, we can expect to find the name of the decedent; date, place and time of death; age and/

or date of birth; place of birth; occupation; names (with mother's maiden name asked for) and sometimes places of birth of both parents; and until recently, cause of death. Certificates from other countries typically have less information, often omitting names of parents. Names of spouses are found in U.S. certificates except on the 1949 and 1956 standard certificate forms. Early certificates, especially in those cities that pioneered death registration, often indicated how long the individual was a resident in the city.

Two major changes in the standard death certificate have taken place over the years. The first, starting in 1949, dropped entries for parents' places of birth—often reported erroneously, but beloved by family historians for their occasional value. These, and usually the still-included names of parents, are examples of secondary information in an original source document, mixed in with the primary information about the circumstances and causes of death.

The other major change came with the 1989 revision, which relegated all the information on cause of death to a lower section of the certificate page, so that it could be omitted from photocopied certificates issued in those states that treat cause of death as confidential health information. In earlier years, late-term stillbirths were reported through a birth and death certificate, or later through an entry on the birth certificate. Since 1930, separate certificates have been used for reporting live births and fetal deaths. The 2003 revised standard death certificate remains only one page in length, but the detailed instructions on how to complete it have been expanded from one to three pages.

## Marriage Certificates

The typical information found on marriage certificates includes the names, addresses, ages and occupations of the parties; their places of

birth and current addresses; and the names and birthplaces of their parents, together with the officiating cleric, judge or other officer and two or three witnesses.

## Divorce Certificates

In most jurisdictions, the official divorce record must be obtained from the court that issued it. The standard certificate of divorce is used by the courts to notify the state vital statistics office for its statistical analysis, and before 1996 for reporting to the National Center for Health Statistics. Certified copies, however, may not be available from the vital statistics office.

## Future Availability of Vital Records

Family history research as we have come to know it will be vastly changed if current trends continue on closing records outright, or imposing long restricted periods before public access is allowed. The Federation of Genealogical Societies and the National Genealogical Society have a joint Records Preservation and Access Committee, with representation from other major genealogical organizations, which is addressing the issue.

Further information is available on the FGS website at <[www.fgs.org/rpa](http://www.fgs.org/rpa)> as the committee continues to monitor developments in this area and on threatened loss or destruction of records, enabling family historians to join in appropriate actions to prevent further access restrictions or record losses. ♡

*Donn Devine, CG®, CGI®, a genealogical consultant from Wilmington, Delaware, is an attorney for the city and archivist of the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington. He is a former National Genealogical Society board member, currently chairs its Standards Committee, and is a trustee of the Board for Certification of Genealogists®.*



**T**oday's family historians have a great advantage over the researchers of yesteryear in the quantity and quality of information that is as close to them as a keystroke and an Internet connection.

Websites such as Ancestry, FamilySearch, and USGenWeb are remarkable in both scope and depth. And there is great research utility in exploring the billions of names found in their databases. But while the name databases are vital, they are not the only aspects of the websites to be explored.

One of the best examples of an under-utilized website is FamilySearch at <www.familysearch.org>. While the 1880-era census records, the International Genealogical Index, the Pedigree Resource Files, and the vital record indexes from around the world provide an enormous name datafile to search, the site has much more to offer. Research Guidance, Research Helps, and the Family History Library Catalog are three sources worthy of further exploration. They are most easily accessed under the Search tab.

## Family History Library Catalog

The Family History Library Catalog is the world's largest genealogy and local history catalog. Among its holdings are published local and family histories, periodical titles, and microfilmed records—both primary and secondary source materials. In this single database a researcher can search through one of the largest collections of compiled genealogies in the world as well as the world's largest collection of microfilmed civil and church, public and private records.

As with any online catalog, one of the best ways to get comfortable with the Family History Library Catalog is simply to experiment with a couple of searches, choosing different search options and noting which provides the most understandable and compre-



hensive research results. This catalog presents the user with eight different search options ranging from the standard author, title, and subject searches to surname, place, and keyword searches. A cautionary note: The keyword search, which holds much promise, is often "temporarily unavailable." The catalog has a nice mouse-over feature whereby a short explanation appears in a box to the left of the search option being considered explaining the particular option.

The top two options, "Place Search" and "Surname Search" are typically the best options to explore. Clicking on "Place Search" will reveal a screen with two input boxes and a few helpful hints. The top input box should be used for the most specific geographic term, and the bottom input box, if used, should be used for the next largest geographic designation or jurisdiction. If the initial search brings up more than one geographic area, you can narrow to the specific location desired. Upon narrowing the geographic area, the search results will be displayed in general subject categories.

For example, under Adams County, Pennsylvania, there are thirty-four subject headings, from archives and libraries to vital records. Clicking on a

particular category will show the specific titles, and clicking on a title will reveal the bibliographic information about the entity. If film notes detailing the number of microfilm rolls and the specific identification numbers of those rolls are available, a link will be provided in the top right-hand corner of the bibliographic record screen.

Searching for compilations containing information on a specific surname can be particularly enlightening. Simply searching on the surname of interest provides a list of resources by prominent family name. Don't be fooled if the family name doesn't appear in the title on the first result screen. Click on the link to the full bibliographic data to see where and how the surname of interest relates to the prominent family. The first results screen also provides the user with the ability to order or sort the initial results by title and by author.

Clicking on a particular title again reveals a full bibliographic record. Pay particular attention to the notes provided by the Family History Library catalogers. Some can be quite extensive. For example, a Witcher family compilation in the Family History Library Catalog had the following note:



“Clabourn D. Witcher (1808–55), son of Tandy Key Witcher and Martha (Patsy) DeLoach and grandson of Daniel Witcher and Susannah Key, lived in Tennessee, married Mary B. Austin about 1835, moved to Allen County, Kentucky, before 1840, and to Clay County, Missouri, by 1855. Descendants lived in Kentucky, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and elsewhere.”

With such extensive notes, it is much easier to determine if the family is the correct one to pursue and perhaps even obtain a lead or two to investigate right from the cataloging record without having access to the actual book.

loaned from Salt Lake City to your nearest Family History Center. It is the closest thing we all have to a world of records at our fingertips. You'll find that ordering materials from Salt Lake City is not a complicated process and takes a very short amount of time.

## Research Guidance

In addition to the Family History Library Catalog, the Research Guidance and Research Helps features of FamilySearch are extraordinary. The left-hand frame of both Research Guidance and Research Helps highlights a research assistant element that can aid in using these informative features. The opening

12. Church Baptisms, Marriages, Burials, Minutes, etc.
13. Mortality Schedule
14. Freedmen Records

Under each subject category for Kentucky is either a strategy for finding records, or a list of links to micro-filmed and published sources listed in the Family History Library Catalog. You'll want to pay close attention to the changing tabs on each of the different results pages. These tabs enhance navigation throughout this rather complex site.

The “Genealogical Collections” link under each geographic location is another important link to note. It gives insight on the best collections in which to conduct research.

The Research Guidance feature is akin to having a personal reference assistant provide clues, tips, and instructions on the best places to seek information. For more experienced researchers, this feature can provide a type of checklist to ensure that key resources aren't missed when documenting a particular person or family line.

Researchers who frequently consult the “Where to Find It” tab in Research Guidance will be linked directly to the specific geographic area's Research Outline. These Research Outlines are among the most significant aspects of the Research Helps feature. Each state outline contains information and links organized into the following categories (but may vary slightly by state):

Archives and Libraries  
Bible Records  
Biography  
Cemeteries  
Census  
Church Records  
Court Records  
Directories  
Emigration and Immigration  
Gazetteers  
Genealogy

**In this single database, a researcher can search through one of the largest collections of compiled genealogies in the world.**

But why bother with the Family History Library Catalog when we have all the name databases to search? First, if you aren't finding the individuals and families that meet a research need or criteria, you may want to see what records are extant from the particular geographic area your ancestors lived. While the Family History Library Catalog is certainly not a complete list of all extant records for all areas of the world, the Family History Department of the LDS Church has been microfilming so extensively around the world and for such a long time that its catalog is the next best thing to a comprehensive list. If you want an idea of the historic records available for a particular area, the Family History Library Catalog is the place to check.

Second, the Family History Library Catalog is the key to getting immediate access to primary sources as well as compiled records. Nearly everything that has a microfilm number can be

screen in Research Guidance invites researchers to select the country, state, or province in which research is being conducted. Selecting a geographic area brings up a vital events list (births, marriages, and deaths) that is organized by time period. Using Kentucky as an example, clicking on “Death, 1850-1899” brings up a search strategy with the following links:

1. The Basics on How to Search for Ancestors in the United States
2. United States Previous Research, Part 1
3. Wills, Administrations, and Inventories
4. Tombstone and Sexton Records
5. Obituary
6. Military Pensions
7. Military Records
8. Genealogical Collections
9. Genealogical and Historical Magazines
10. History
11. Histories of Regiments and Wars



History  
Land and Property  
Maps  
Military Records  
Naturalization and Citizenship  
Newspapers  
Periodicals  
Probate Records  
Vital Records  
Voting Registers  
Further Reading

Using Louisiana as an example, you will find contact information as well as links to ten major record repositories including the National Archives branch in Fort Worth, the Louisiana State Library, and the Louisiana Division of Archives, Record Management, and History under the Archives and Libraries link.

In addition, Internet resources and publications available in the Family History Library Catalog are highlighted. Following the Cemeteries link reveals major publications microfilmed by the Family History Library and links to the catalog. Similarly, Emigration and Immigration links provide excellent information on the peopling of Louisiana, including when particular ethnic groups arrived and where they tended to settle. The availability of passenger lists for the Port of New Orleans is detailed with a link to the research outline specifically on immigration sources. Also, the Military link provides information on the major engagements involving Louisiana troops and links to Louisiana-specific resources.

The research outlines provide a template for exploring a particular area's resources, present direct links to geography-specific materials listed in the Family History Library Catalog, and provide important contexts in which to pursue family history in a particular area.

Not only is each section of the outlines printable, most of them can be downloaded as PDF documents as well. You can create a genealogical reference

library on your own computer. There is certainly no reason now for not knowing and not exploring all of the best resources and materials for the particular ancestral area.

### Research Helps

In addition to the Research Outlines, Research Helps provide a number of additional online documents and guides to enhance your research opportunities. Each state has a description of state-wide indexes and collections, as well as a historical background publication that includes a timeline of significant events in the state. Census worksheet PDFs are provided for all the years in which a federal census was taken for a particular state.

In the Research Helps section you will also find Research Outlines for Canadian provinces and worksheets for the respective Canadian census records. Some geographic areas have links to sources that document boundary changes. For other countries around the world, additional Research Outlines have been compiled as well as letter-writing guides and word lists to assist those not fluent in a particular language. Guides that include beginning steps for research are conveniently located throughout this entire section.

These resources—the Family History Library Catalog, Research Guidance, and Research Helps—can be found under the Search tab at FamilySearch. If you take the time to explore FamilySearch, you will find, in addition to a large and growing name database, extraordinary resources to assist you in finding more data and in being a more experienced and efficient researcher. ☞

*Curt B. Witcher, MLS, FUGA, is the Historical Genealogy Department manager at the Allen County Public Library, and a former president of both the Federation of Genealogical Society and the National Genealogical Society.*



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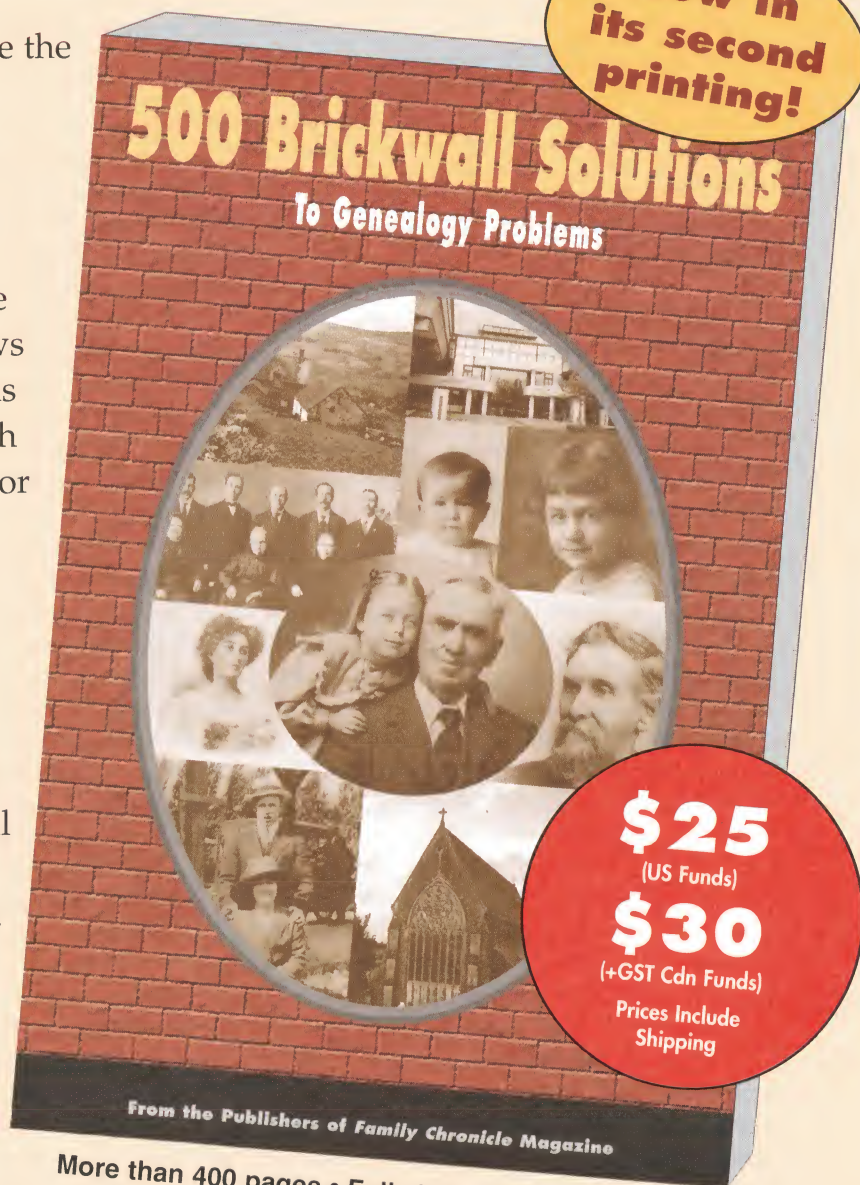
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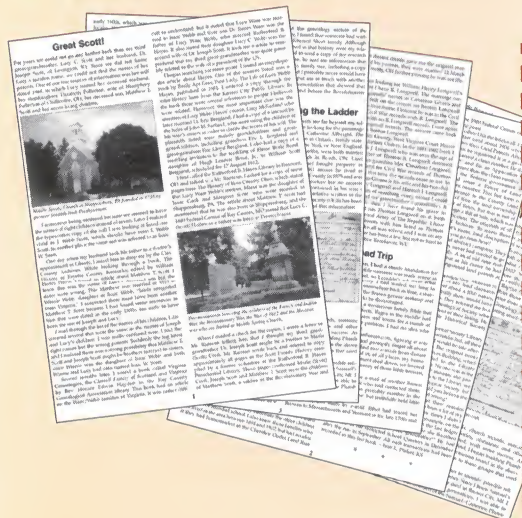
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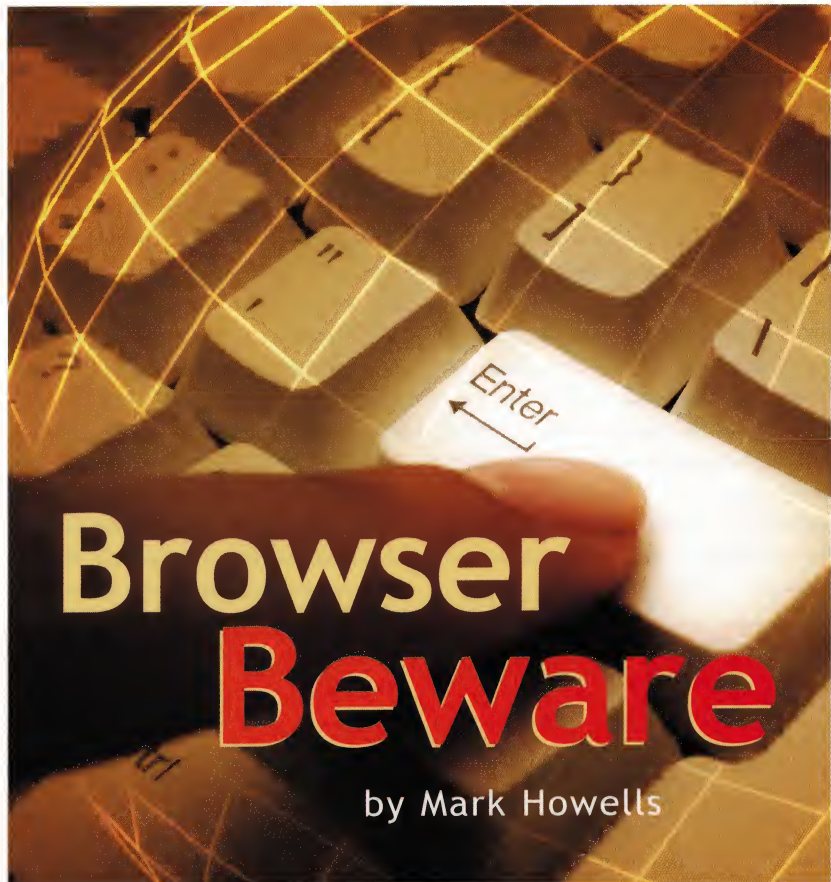
**T**here is a new and insidious threat lurking on the Internet these days. While you are casually surfing the Web, some unscrupulous webmasters have laid a trap for you that is camouflaged as a desirable link. Clicking on a deceptive link may cause your web browser to be hijacked.

### Control Over Your Browser

Hijacking occurs when an innocent web user clicks on a link which, unbeknownst to the user, downloads software onto his or her PC. The software then takes control of various features and actions of the web browser. This is sometimes called "drive-by downloading."

The most basic form of hijacking changes your default Internet homepage to one the perpetrators want you to see. (Sometimes even the 404 error pages that are displayed when a given website cannot be found are hijacked to show what the hijacker wants you to see.) Hijackers do this to guarantee traffic to their website or search facility, which increases their advertising revenues.

In the simplest cases, these changes can be countered by going into your browser's Internet Options and changing the defaults back to what you want them to be. Unfortunately, this does not always work as some hijacking software actually makes modifications to your Windows Registry, which automatically returns the defaults to the unwanted sites each time you reboot your PC. Editing the Registry yourself is always done "at your own risk," according to Microsoft, so getting the misleading entries out of the Registry is fraught with system-stability peril. In addition, some forms of hijacking also load software that can automatically re-edit the Registry to ensure that the unwanted defaults stay in place. No matter how many times you change your original browser



settings back and fix your Registry, the unwanted webpage defaults return. Some of these hijackings are nearly impossible to remove manually due to their complexity.

### Signs and Portents

Aside from the very obvious clues of a changed home page or changed search preferences, one of the main symptoms of your web browser being hijacked is seeing pop-up advertising on familiar websites where you have never seen such ads before.

If you visit your genealogy favorites and suddenly a pop-up window floats on top of the site advertising low long-distance rates or something worse, it may not be that that genealogy site has added the advertising. It might be your hijacked browser making those ads appear.

One of the most common misconceptions in the Internet world is that pop-up, pop-under, or any other type of "new window" advertising is exclusively under the control of the web pages you visit. While the webpage could be generating such ads, your browser is likely being instructed to display this advertising by software that has been surreptitiously loaded onto your PC. Some companies actually make a business of selling advertising generated by your browser when you surf to specified websites.

Another symptom of potential hijacking is system instability. Odd errors, unexpected shut-downs, and other unstable behavior from your PC while you are running your web browser can be an indication that you have hijacking software interfering with the operation of your PC.



## No, It's Not Okay

One of the most basic things you can do to prevent hijacking is not to click OK to everything you are offered in message boxes while you are surfing. Read the message carefully and if you have any doubt about what is being proffered, click No. This will at least protect you from the polite hijackers who have the courtesy to ask first before messing up your browser. By saying "no" to Internet message boxes, you can avoid a world of hurt.

One of the more radical ways to prevent browser hijacking is to change browsers. Browser hijacking is nearly exclusively targeted against Microsoft's Internet Explorer, the dominant web browser on the market. By using a

Downloads website is located at [www.microsoft.com/downloads](http://www.microsoft.com/downloads).

## Recovery

Avoiding hijacking can be difficult no matter how vigilant you are. If you believe that your browser may have been hijacked, the first thing to do is to educate yourself. Several online forums are devoted to hijack-ing exploits. SpywareInfo at [www.spywareinfo.com/forums](http://www.spywareinfo.com/forums) and ComputerCops at [www.computer-cops.us/forums.html](http://www.computer-cops.us/forums.html) are two good places to go to ask questions and get more information.

As mentioned earlier, manually recovering from a hijacking can be nearly impossible. Fortunately, there is software that can assist you in recover-

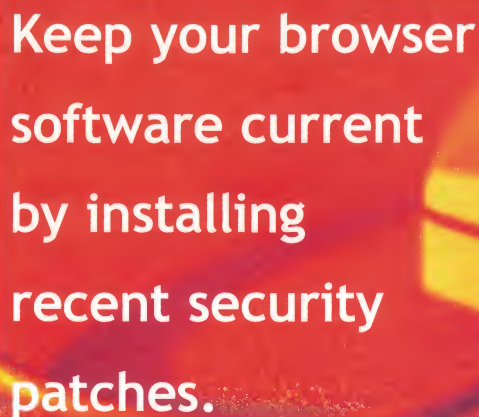
keep current on the software's latest updates as new exploit detection is added frequently.

Browser Hijack Blaster at [www.wilderssecurity.com/bhblaster.html](http://www.wilderssecurity.com/bhblaster.html) is another freeware download program. This one works in the background, continuously monitoring for known hijack attempts. Browser Hijack Blaster monitors your Internet Explorer homepage, default page, and search page to detect any changes to them. If changes are made, Browser Hijack Blaster informs you and asks if you want to keep the new change or not.

Yet another freeware download is Hijack This at <http://tomcoyote.com/hjt/>. Hijack This reviews key areas of your Windows Registry and file system. Hijack This is run after a potential hijacking and will list all of the changes made to your Registry and critical files. Hijack This lists all changes in a log—whether they are benign or a potential exploit. It is up to you to determine the entries you want removed. This can be a very dangerous thing to do as it is often difficult to tell a legitimate entry from a hijack exploit. Hijack This is designed to be used by knowledgeable users. An online forum is available at [www.computercops.us/forum67.html](http://www.computercops.us/forum67.html) to get volunteer assistance in determining whether an entry in your Hijack This log is a potential threat or not. You really need to know what you're doing before you delete any Hijack This log entries.

Start Page Guard at [www.spywareinfo.com/downloads/spg/](http://www.spywareinfo.com/downloads/spg/) is another freeware program that detects and prevents changes to your homepage and searchpage defaults. It is really a one-trick pony and does not protect against or recover from all possible hijackings.

Spyware Sweeper at [www.web-root.com/wb/land/land-spysweeper6\\_6.php](http://www.web-root.com/wb/land/land-spysweeper6_6.php) is a program that, like Spybot Search & Destroy, is primarily designed to block spyware but also functions



Keep your browser  
software current  
by installing  
recent security  
patches.

different browser such as Netscape <http://channels.netscape.com/ns/browsers>, Mozilla [www.mozilla.org](http://www.mozilla.org), Opera [www.opera.com/download](http://www.opera.com/download) or others, you can avoid most browser hijackings.

If you don't want to change browsers, keep your operating system and browser software current by downloading and installing the most recent security patches. Many hijackers utilize security holes in either the operating system or the browser software to exploit your PC. By staying current with the latest security patches, you can foil many of the hijacking attempts you may be exposed to. Microsoft's

ing. Spybot Search & Destroy at [www.safer-networking.org](http://www.safer-networking.org) is a good all-around spyware detector and remover. (Spyware is a general term for software programs loaded onto PCs that surreptitiously monitor our online actions. It is usually used to gather data about potential website customers.) In addition to finding and eliminating spyware, Spybot Search & Destroy will find and eliminate hijacking software. Spybot is software you run when you suspect that you've been hijacked. It scans your entire system looking for known exploits and then gives you the option of eliminating them automatically. When using Spybot, be sure to



against hijack exploits. It is downloadable for \$29.95. Spyware Sweeper runs continuously as a background process to catch potential spyware and hijacking software before it is downloaded to your PC. Spyware Eliminator at <[www.spywareinfo.com/rd/aluria](http://www.spywareinfo.com/rd/aluria)> is another commercial offering that works against hijacking and can be downloaded for \$29.99. The major anti-virus software vendors such as McAfee and Symantec are already moving into the anti-spyware market and will soon be adding anti-hijacking functionality to their programs.

When confronted with a hijacking, your best option is to use several of the above programs in conjunction with one another. This helps ensure that any hijack exploits not caught by

a single anti-hijacking program will likely be caught and deleted by the others that you use. For example, in a recent hijacking at the Howells household, we used Hijack This and Spybot Search & Destroy as free programs and purchased Spyware Sweeper to use as an ongoing preventative measure.

### Browser Piracy on the High Internet

There is a very good chance that you or someone you know will have their web browser hijacked in the near future. Unfortunately, there are only a few steps you can take to keep your browser hijack-free. Just like computer virus authors, the hijackers continue to modify their exploits to stay one step ahead of the anti-hijacking soft-

ware. The basic design of the PC is at the core of this problem. It is unable to recognize the difference between changes we want to make on it and changes malicious software makes against our will.

Hijacking, spyware, and other Internet exploits that change the way your PC functions will continue to be a problem. Legislators are only now taking up the problem and attempting to pass laws against this sort of obnoxious harm done to Internet users. As always, it will take time for the laws to catch up with technology. In the meanwhile, be careful what you click on. ☞

*Mark Howells thinks before he clicks  
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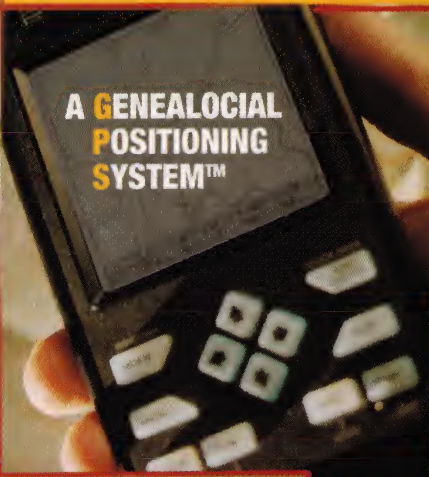
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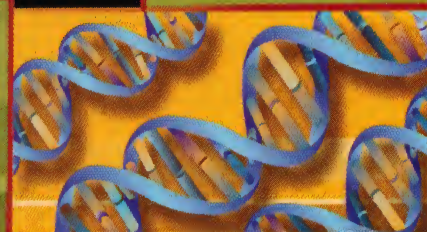
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The e-mail didn't look like anything special. It certainly didn't look like the end of a thirty-year quest. The morning after Thanksgiving I sat down at my computer to clear out my Inbox and came to an e-mail with a subject line that read: Phyllis Bates.

Thinking it was just some new person who was intrigued with the online story of my Grandma Lily's long-missing sister, Edie, I took a sip of tea and pressed Enter. The e-mail began:

"My name is Keith, and I am Phyllis Bates' son and Edie Colsell's grandson. I have copies of the photographs you have on your website..."

When I was a little girl, I looked forward to my occasional weekend at Grandma's. I know that my love of good strong tea—fixed the British way—comes straight from those memories. Grandma's house was small but filled with things I loved to look at. I spent hours trying to figure out how she had stitched yarn into canvas to create the nosegay of pansies on her footstool. I loved looking at her collection of English teacups, her rarely used pink sherry glasses, and an intriguing print of a young woman walking through an arch in what Grandma called the "old country." Her pride for the England of her youth was unmistakable.

Outside there was always something edible. Oranges, strawberries, apricots, apples, and almonds proliferated as the seasons changed. Grandma was generous to a fault, cheerful, and strong-willed. On these visits, I received absolute adoration and her full attention. I loved it!

When I was about seven years old, I remember being perched on a branch up in the apricot tree sniffing the scents of springtime. I happened to catch a glimpse of Grandma through the living room window. She was sitting in her street window easy chair, reading something and shaking her head, looking sad. I wanted to know what was wrong, so I ran inside.



## My Search for Edie

by Jana McPherson Black

I asked her what she was reading and she said, "A letter from folks in the old country." Then she folded the letter, wiped her eyes, and heaved a huge sigh. I asked her if she was sad. She told me that her folks in the old country were not as lucky as she was and she felt bad that she couldn't help them. For the first time, I realized that there was another side of Grandma that I didn't know. I wanted to know her better, but I knew from the look on her face that the conversation had ended.

I grew up, married, and had just learned that I was pregnant with my first child when I heard that Grandma was dying. She lived with my parents for several months until they were forced to put her into a care facility. A week before she died, I drove to the hospital and spent the afternoon with her.

I sat next to her bed. Through gritted teeth, Grandma told me that she didn't understand why life was so hard on her. Her talk turned to the disappearance of her sister Edie. She said that one of her biggest regrets was that no one had ever learned what had happened to Edie and her daughter Phyllis.

With no idea of what I was committing myself to, I promised Grandma

that I would try to find Edie and Phyllis.

Grandma died 2 June 1973 and my little girl, Annetta Lilyrose, was born mid-July. That baby girl is now a thirty-year-old woman. It has taken all this time to finally learn the full story of Edie.

Over the years I raised three more children and kept a job. I had no time to actively look for Edie. Every time I thought about it, I felt I had failed in my promise to my grandmother. I had no idea if Edie was dead or alive, and time was passing quickly. When the nineties brought the Internet and its worldwide audience, I saw a possible new way to find Edie. When I attended a work-related website workshop, I wondered if putting up a website showing what I knew of Edie's story could bring Edie's descendants to me. In 1998, my first genealogy website was born.

As with most endeavors, this became a "two steps forward, one step back" process. I took the time to go through boxes of accumulated family data, organizing it into binders. I discovered pictures of Edie and Phyllis, plus letters that provided chronological details that helped me understand Grandma's lifelong sadness. My webpage summarized this information and I hoped

Above: The author's grandmother, Lily Rose Colsell McPherson, ca. 1920.



that a descendant of Edie's might find it and contact me.

During my childhood, I had asked Grandma about her family any time I thought she would answer. Trying to get details regarding her younger years was tricky as Grandma didn't want to talk about it; it made her too sad. Bit by bit, though, I learned that Grandma, who was christened Rose Lily, was born in a rural village, Chinnor, northwest of London.

Her mother, Martha, died from pleurisy in 1901 when Lily was just four years old. Lily and her older sister, Edie, were sent by their father George to live with their "mother's people." George, a thirty-three-year-old widower with young children to raise, surely felt overwhelmed. The local midwife sent her daughter, Emily, to help out so George could work. Within a year, Emily and George were married. But while Emily struggled to care for George's two boys and her own babies, George spent more and more time frequenting the local pub.

By this time, Edie had taken a job as a maid in Thame, and Lily, now a seven-year-old, was pulled from school and brought back to Chinnor to an "ugly stepmother" situation where she was expected to care for her new step-siblings. Emily, determined to break George of his drinking and gambling habits, instructed Lily to collect daily pints of beer for George. Lily hated this chore. The smell was bad enough, but the taunting she got from local boys as she walked the bucket home was intolerable. By the age of twelve she was a blossoming young girl; the taunts turned to torture and some of the boys tried to manhandle her.

Edie married Albert Bates in 1912. He was caretaker for Whirlbush Farm, which was about three and a half miles from nearby Haddenham. But Edie didn't forget about Lily or her plight. She wrote to her aunt for advice. Aunt Alice recommended that Lily pack her bags, get on the train, and come to

London—which she did. Once there, Alice got Lily a job working as a nurse's aide. At age fourteen, Lily was supporting herself.

When an American patient at the hospital offered Lily a position "working pantry" in her home, Lily leapt at the chance to leave the hospital.

In 1914, unrest in Europe threatened war, but Lily's employers nevertheless decided to leave on a continental tour of Europe. They invited Lily to accompany them, but the idea frightened her.



Edith (Edie) Eliza Colsell Bates, ca. 1914.

They accepted her choice and introduced her to another American couple, Ben and Victoria Allen, who hired Lily as their nanny. Ben was the London correspondent for the Associated Press. Lily couldn't have known it then, but this new job would change her life forever.

In June, the Allens headed to Woodland, California, on home leave and took Lily with them. Within a month, newspapers brought word that war had broken out in Europe and the Allens packed up to return to London. But Lily chose not to go back where war was sure to spread, and at age sixteen, she took a job at the Woodland Tuberculosis Sanatorium.

By 1915, the letters show that Grandma, albeit an irregular commu-

nicant, was keeping in touch with her brothers and sister in England. The news was not often good. Grandma's brother Ted was killed in France in September 1915, and Edie wrote of a miscarriage. Then, good news. Edie gave birth to a daughter, Phyllis, in March 1916. Next came more news of loss. Grandma's brother George had survived the war but died of meat poisoning contracted from his work in a butcher shop.

In time, Lily met Sidney James McPherson, another British immigrant, and they were married in 1917. Their first son was born in 1919. My father and a third son followed by 1922.

By 1925, Lily had not heard from Edie for two years. Finally, a letter came from Aunt Mary:

"I am sorry to send you such news. Edie left Albert last October, taking Phyllis with her, and they have not been seen or heard from since. We put the matter in the hands of the police and I am sure they have done their best to trace her, but without success. Edie was very friendly with a young man from Haddenham living about two miles from the farm. He was missing at the same time so we think they have gone together with Phyllis."

Believing there was little she could do from the United States, Grandma lived with this story until her death.

Armed with this collected information, I took advantage of anything I thought would aid my research. I visited the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, joined the local genealogical society, attended national conventions, and took seminars. When I learned about the RootsWeb geographic mailing lists, I joined one for Oxfordshire, England, and poured out my story. Almost immediately my efforts yielded astonishing results.

A woman on the list wrote the she lived near Whirlbush Farm and would go there to see if anyone knew of Albert Bates. Within a week, I received an e-mail from a woman



named Lisa, identifying herself as the wife of the son of the original owners of Whirlbush Farm. They still lived on the farm! She was intrigued with my story and offered to take it to the *Thame Gazette*.

In October 1998, the story appeared on the front page of the *Gazette* and included a picture of Edie. A woman contacted Lisa and identified herself as Albert's niece, saying she was trying to get a death certificate for Edie. She promised to call back if she was successful. The lady would not leave her number and another call never came.

Later, a man called who had gone to school with Phyllis. He remembered seeing her walk the long road to school and said kids felt sorry for her. He said his teacher told the class that Phyllis had been gored by a bull and died.

Intrigued by these new pieces of information, I telephoned a cousin who still lived near Chinnor to ask if he had ever heard stories about Edie. He said his grandfather told him to "be good or you'll end up like Edie." He never knew what that meant, but when he asked he was told that Edie had run off to America and married Doris Day's uncle. Obviously, the story had grown to mythic proportions.

I decided to check out the story anyway. I contacted Doris Day's agent who agreed to look into it. She told me that if there was anything to the rumor, she would call me back. No call ever came.

Between 1998 and 2003, I exhausted everything I could imagine to glean new information, but nothing worked. Meanwhile Edie's story sat on my webpage until, in November 2003, I received the e-mail that changed everything.

The e-mail continued:

"My family knew nothing of Edie's or our mother's early life because it was never discussed at home, but we do know that our mum and Edie left Chinnor in 1926 with Will from

Haddenham. We have his 1926 diary and copies of his job applications to a butcher in Liphook Hants where all three moved.

"When Will was seventy in 1971 and started to collect his pension, our mother Phyllis asked him why it was a single man's only, and he then told her he had never married Edie our Nan and he was not Phyllis's father.

"When our mother Phyllis died in 1999, myself and my wife cleared her

played at least as big a part in the final result. It was my cousin's wife who had decided to put the name "Colsell" into the search engine that brought up my website. She said they had been meaning to do it since Phyllis's death, but it was only a night with nothing else on the agenda that had made it happen.

E-mails that include pictures of both women have been exchanged with my overseas cousins, and I am now copying all the letters I have,



Edith Mary Phyllis Bates, ca. 1920, at Whirlbush Farm with her two dogs, Spot and Jennie.

**In the end, time,  
chance, and  
serendipity played  
a big part in the  
final result.**

flat and found lots of early photos, including yours, and Mum's birth certificate with her name as Edith Mary Phyllis Bates. This is the first time any of us knew our Grandfather's name."

As facts were exchanged, I slowly and sadly absorbed that Edie had died just one year earlier than Grandma. It was true that Phyllis had been gored by a bull, though she hadn't died; she told her five children the story, but refused to show them the scar. Phyllis died in 1999. I grieved that I would never meet either of these women who had become so real to me. But as all the information sunk in, I looked forward to patching the true story together with my five newly discovered cousins.

Reflecting on the events of this search, I am struck with how it all came together. I did have to do the research. I had to learn the methodologies and get my data in order. But in the end, time, chance, and serendipity

which I will send to them. It turns out that I may know more about their Nan's early life than they do.

I telephoned each of my new-found cousins at Christmas and was delighted to hear their voices. We see clear family resemblances in the pictures—an adult Phyllis looks like some younger pictures of Grandma. We have all laughed about "family ears" and cried that circumstances have prevented visits and exchanges over the years. My cousins have children and grandchildren the ages of my own children, and a reunion of the "Descendants of George" is in the works for 2005. ♀

*Jana McPherson Black is a researcher and lecturer specializing in the use of Internet strategies to complement traditional genealogical research methods. She is currently Associate State Coordinator for the California GenWeb Project.*

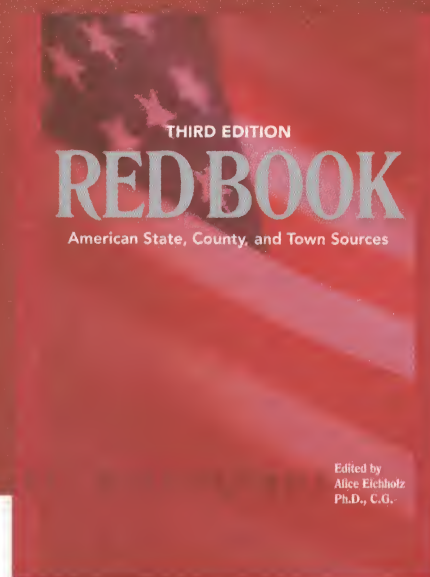


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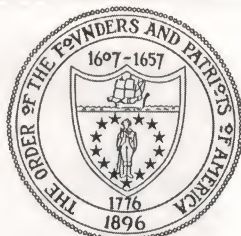
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# Confederate Genes *by Melissa Spencer*

The Civil War battle, reenacted with crumpled paper that served as bullets we threw across the room, helped me fall in love with history. As an eighth grader, I was proud to fight against the other half of the class for the Confederate States because I knew that my ancestors probably did the same. But despite my vivid imagination, I always pictured these ancestors as very different from me. What could I possibly have in common with slave owners from so far away who lived in such a different time?

My grandfather, an avid genealogist, recently introduced me to Durham Hall Smith, my great-great-great-grandfather from North Carolina. His story gave me some insight into who I am.

Durham Hall Smith was the fortunate owner of a gristmill and thus exempt from enlistment in the Civil War. But because of his brother's great fear of going to war, at age thirty-one, Durham joined the Confederate side in his brother's place and fought under General Robert E. Lee.

Durham later spoke of living on three biscuits a day and wearing shoes full of holes in the freezing cold. But these were the least of his troubles. After a few months of fighting, he was taken prisoner by the Union army. In two weeks he was released on parole, but his run of bad luck continued.

A bullet put a hole in Durham's stomach and took part of his liver with it. He lay injured in the bottom of a creek bed, unable to move, for three

days. When a Yankee soldier passed by, Durham impulsively gave him the Mason sign. The Yankee was also a Mason and he returned the sign. He gave Durham a drink from his canteen then dragged him out of the creek bed and propped him up against a tree.

Meanwhile, Durham's troops came by each day to rescue the soldiers they thought could survive. The third day

long to get wounded again, this time with a bullet to the chest. The small Bible he carried in his breast pocket saved his life that day, and Durham knew he was meant to survive the war.

Shortly afterward, the war came to an end and Durham returned home. He lived with the pain and scars of his war wounds throughout his life, but they didn't stop him from being an integral member of the community. Durham even named his first son born after the war Union, in honor of his unknown benefactor. And although a clamshell covered the hole in his stomach, he still raised a large family, hauled freight across North Carolina, made shoes, and ran a turpentine still.

Eleven children and many descendants later, I am one of the many who are honored to keep Durham Hall Smith's legacy alive. It's thrilling to learn of the courage and strength that got my great-great-great-grandfather through the horrors of the Civil War.

Durham fought for his brother and survived for his family. I hope my desire to serve those around me brings half the inspiring results for my posterity. Although I don't carry a Bible around in my pocket, maybe the genes fit after all. ♪

*Melissa Spencer is a senior at Boston University majoring in public relations. She considers herself a genealogy diletante.*



they passed by, Durham begged them to take him because his wife and two children needed him. They told him they didn't have anything to kill the pain let alone save his life. He replied that he knew he would survive if they would just give him a chance.

A searing iron poker without anesthesia put Durham on the road to recovery, and after a sixty-day respite Durham was expected to report back to the battlefields. It didn't take him



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